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THE
PHILOSOPHY
OF
ALL POSSIBLE REVELATION
AND OTHER WRITINGS.

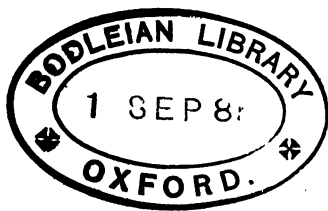
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THE PHILOSOPHY OF ALL POSSIBLE REVELATION.

**Warum sucht' ich den Weg so sehnsuchtsvoll,
Wenn ich ihn nicht den Brüdern zeigen soll?**

—GOETHE.

DEDICATION.

THE first time I saw you, Amyntas, many years ago now, you took half-a-crown out of my pocket. Since then I have kept my eye upon you. You may, perhaps, say with the shepherd Damoetas of old : *Parcius ista viris tamen objicienda memento.*

In keeping my eye upon you, I have seen a sign of the times. When you became a shepherd to the Free Hill of Zion Company, you came under an obligation to feed your sheep according to their Little Directory. No doubt, at that time, the down was scarcely off your chin, and you would be thinking (tell the truth) more of Amaryllis and Phillis and other shepherdesses than about Directories and how

to feed your sheep. One is apt to act rather thoughtlessly in those early downy days, and afterwards, when one's eyes are opened to see what sort of document the Little Directory really is, it is late enough to give up shepherding and begin life anew. And, when true care for the sheep it is that opens one's eyes, it becomes a serious question whether—Directory here, Directory there!—one should leave the sheep to the mercy of certain shepherds; and I, for one, say that one should not. *"That's nae a'thegeether the kin' o' girse that he unnertook to feed his sheep on,"* said a shrewd old wife from the North one day, after seeing you feed your flock. *"Na, 'oman,"* replied her neighbour, *"it's better."* Nobody, I should think, can detest more than you do the blasphemous description of Pan in the Little Directory; and surely it is far better to speak simple nonsense, like the shepherd Arminius, than to speak nonsense and blasphemy both. It is better still to leave all that well alone, and feed one's flock of sheep

and lambs like the shepherd Cephas of old.

The politic shepherd Ulysses, whose former flock you now feed, has sometimes got together a "sufficient number" of other shepherds, for the purpose of curbing certain of your *tendencies*; and among them, once at least, the late high-minded, noble, transparent-hearted old shepherd, Tullibolus. But Ulysses himself is by no means now so orthodox as once he was; and where he may end no one can tell. It will probably depend much on circumstances. By-and-bye, he may "*not be prepared to say that such and such a view might not be held,*" essential as he is "prepared to say" it is, owing to miscellaneous considerations, to suppress them at present. He was once, I remember well, as orthodox as Marion; and I myself have heard him say he would believe that the fossils which are found in the rocks were created exactly as they are found rather than not believe every word of the Shepherd's Big Directory. He

believed, too, then, that the six days of creation were six days of twenty-four hours each ; but I fancy he is now "*not prepared to say that the view might not be held*" that—and evolving too—

A great while ago the world began,
With, hey-ho, the wind and the rain.

But to let you know about Marion and her orthodoxy, I must relate an incident of which I was witness one summer evening, and I only wish it might give you the same pleasure it gave to me. About a mile or so from Glamerton, there was, in the parish of Peatreek, a small croft called Birkenbrae, of which the tenant was one William Lobban. At the distance of two or three hundred yards from Lobban's cottage, there was a very large solitary beech-tree, the lowest boughs, shot far out, stooping so as almost to touch the ground. The evening was serene and beautiful, and I took a fancy to climb, the fancy being linked secretly, doubtless, to the pleasure that I used to

enjoy in boyhood from reading in a similar leafy tent. I got a convenient seat on one of the boughs, and pulled out a pocket copy of Schiller's *Gedichte*. The song of the mavis was loud in the neighbouring wood ; I listened to it with delight, enhanced by the occasional wail of the lapwing, and, at the same time, through the branches I watched some lambs feeding near the tree, while the rush of a burn through a scroggy glen close by gave a fresh feeling to the heart. Soon I heard the sound of Lobban's evening psalm ; for family worship is conducted, as you know, by the serious Scottish peasant every evening and morning as regularly as any other meal is prepared. The mavis's song, the Christian's psalm, the sight of the lambs, and the rush of the burn, in the stillness of a summer's evening, harmonised well with a certain thought that was never far away in those days, whatever else might be present with me ; and this thought perhaps it was that unconsciously guided me

as I turned to the charming poem, *Ritter Toggenburg*. I had read it through several times with profound appreciation, when I heard a voice below the tree. It was Marion, then a girl of about nine years, a really handsome child, with a sweet earnest face and curly fair hair, and such an *old*, yet innocent, smile. I knew her, and had spoken to her that day at the burnside, where she was with a pet-lamb, which followed her about wherever she went. Uncle William, she told me, had given it to her *to call her own*, and she seemed to think that a splendid gift ; but after all, what does any of us possess otherwise than so ? What is it that we have, except *to call our own*, and for a short time too ? Infinite was her delight in the lamb. Looking through the branches, I saw this pet run to her, whilst the others went further off, and looked wistfully back. She held in her hand a wooden dish containing some milk, probably a portion of what had been given her to her own supper. She knelt down

on a soft green sward near some broom bushes yellow with bloom. She held out the dish, but when the lamb, without ceremony, was about to lap the milk, she withdrew it. "Oh, fie for shame!" she cried, "would you take your supper without saying grace? Regardless creature! Not a drop shall you get till you say it. Come now: *Gracious God—yes—we have sinned against thee—yes, go on!—and are unworthy of thy mercy; pardon our sins, and bless—hoot, toot!—these mercies for our use—have you forgotten?—and help us to eat and drink—no, not to eat just now—to thy glory, for Christ's sake.* Now, say *Amen. Amen? Amen? Say Amen.* That's right. Now, here!"

The lamb soon lapped up the milk; and Marion embraced it for some time, putting her arms round its neck, and holding her own head against the lamb's, while she made various long inarticulate, groaning sounds through her nose, expressive of affection—"H'mmmm! *my lambie!* h'mmm! h'mmm: *lambie, my*

lambie ! h'mmmmm !” She then said, “Now, lambie, you must say your *Good Words*”. (This is the term given in Strathglamour, and elsewhere in the North, to what is called the *Mother's Catechism* in some other parts of the country.)

“*Who made you ?*—Do you not know that ? Oh, fie ! Oh, shame, in a Christian land ! 'Twas God. He made both you and me, and the other lambs there, and the bushes, and that big tree, and the whole earth, and the sky, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the bird that you hear singing up by there in the wood, and the peesweeps, and the burn, and everything. Every beggar boy, I'm sure, could tell that. Now, mind and always say it was God when you are asked again.

“*Who redeems you ?*—Can't tell that either ! Oh, dear ! Just think ! One who is the Second Person in the Godhead, and equal to God the Father himself, quite equal, gave up his throne in Heaven,

and came down, and took flesh, and died for love. And yet you cannot answer me! It was for you and me that he died; and yet, you little heathen wretch— But *you* are not to blame!” Here she embraced the lamb again. “Poor lamb! H’mmm! h’mmm! h’mmmmmmm! If I had been neglected, *I* would have been just like you; perhaps worse. The shame is not yours, but your parents’. Neglected lamb, it is Jesus Christ. And he’s called the Lamb, too; but never mind that. He wasn’t simple like you. Didn’t he give such answers to the Pharisees! and you don’t know your *Good Words!* But no wonder if he could answer them. Didn’t he make them? And didn’t he know always and always before they were born everything that was in them? And didn’t he know from all eternity, when everything was nothing, and there was nothing at all but nothing, what answers he would give them? But never mind that. The way to Heaven is now plain. Believe in him,

and just give him your heart, and he will make it pure and keep it pure. But Jesus—you can call him Jesus, or you can call him Jesus Christ, or you can call him Christ, and it's not rude to call him Christ; but my mother always calls him our Saviour, and my father calls him God the Son—he rose again from the dead, and ascended up into Heaven. Now, yesterday, my father told George Thomson, who is always complaining, and there's never anything right with him, that he mustn't complain; *mustn't!* not in this universe, where a Man sits on the throne of it with the marks of five wounds in his body. And George was very angry; and when my father saw that he was angry, he scolded him, and told him to go and do nothing else as usual but go about and lament that people were unjust to him, and that he was neglected, and that he had far more than his own share of pain and trouble. Now, lambie, you mustn't complain. *Mustn't!* NEVER!

“ *Who sanctifies you?*—Oh, me! do

you not know ? Oh, me ! I fear you'll be lost ! Oh, lambie, lambie, do you not know it's the Holy Ghost that sanctifies you ? All our poor strivings would be quite in vain, if it were not for the inspiring grace of the Holy Spirit ; and if we were not made meet for Heaven, the purity of that blessed abode would give us pain instead of bliss. Oh, what kind of woman *could* she be, your mother, not to let you know how you were to fly from Hell and get to Heaven ! Why didn't she teach you at night, as my mother teaches me, those heavenly truths, to save your soul ? She—*surely—could—not—be—in* her right mind.

“ *What are you made of ?—*Oh, dear, *that's* simple. Dust.

“ *What should this teach us ?—*Quite right ! you know that. I'm *glad* you know that. Quite right !—To be humble and mindful of death.”

After a pause, during which she looked as if listening impatiently to the lamb, Marion continued, to my still greater

surprise : "What's that you say? If Adam had stood, though Eve had fallen, how would it have been? Now, lambie, never think such things. Such questions do *no* good. What is written is enough for us. You have an idle brain! It was in Adam, and not in Eve, that we fell. Don't ask such things."

After another impatient pause: "Worse and worse! It is Satan that puts this into your head. I'm quite shocked! You say it was not just that you should fall in him. If it had been *you* instead of Adam, are you so sure that you would have remained sinless? I will tell you something; but you will promise not to repeat it? Very well. Last year my father forbade us all to touch the apples till they were quite ripe, and yet I went and took one. Now, if I had been the federal head, all men would have sinned in *me*; so what have *I* to say? I knew that I was doing wrong."

After a longer and still more impatient pause: "Now, *hush*! No more of that!

A child like you to say such things !
You cannot see how three are one, nor
 how one is three ! We must believe that
 six are none, and twelve six less than
 none, if it were in God's most holy Word.
 That's what my mother said to George,
 and that's what I say to you. George is
 my brother, you know, and I told him
 about you, and he's coming out to see
 you and auntie and uncle some day soon.
 Now, I will say a psalm to you that you
 should learn by heart, and then I will bid
 you good-night.

“The Lord is my shepherd !
 I never shall know
 What want is. He leads me
 Where still waters flow :
 He makes me in pastures
 Of tender green grass
 To lie down, on the banks
 Where those still waters pass.
 He leads me beside them ;
 My soul he restores ;
 For the sake of the name
 That my heart most adores,
 In right paths he leads me.

And tho' I walk thro'
 The vale of the shadow
 Of death, as I do,
 No wolf, and no lion,
 Nor evil, I'll fear !—
 Thy rod and staff comfort ;
 For still thou art near.
 Thou preparest my table
 In the face of my foes ;
 Thou anointest my head ;
 And my cup overflows.
 Thy goodness and mercy
 Shall follow me sure,
 As long as the days
 Of my life shall endure ;
 And at last, and forever
 (The joy—who can tell !),
 In the house of the Lord
 With the Lord I shall dwell."

Marion had just said these words when, hearing her name loudly called, she went hastily away, followed by her lamb. Her uncle came to meet her ; and when they were gone, I went home, musing on the strange unexpected entertainment that I had so much enjoyed. At first I was inclined to consider this child as a psycho-

logical curiosity, but I soon saw that that would be a mistake. It is true that she acted her part to perfection—that of a grown person instructing a child ; but to the lunatic, the lover, and the poet, Shakspeare might have added *the child*, as being “all compact” of imagination, and, perhaps, he would have done so, if the length of the verse had permitted. It is true that Marion was as thoroughbred a Calvinist as most country parsons, and understood “the scheme of redemption,” as it is called, and could expound it too, as well, and with greater delight to her hearer ; but all this is far from being beyond a fairly intelligent girl of nine years. If she was a psychological curiosity, she was not a rare one. I came to this conclusion on considering many facts of my own experience relating principally to “children of a larger growth,” and on recollecting Rabelais’ admirable description of Hearsay : “He had as many ears all over his head and the rest of his body as Argus formerly had eyes ; and was as

blind as a beetle, and had the palsy in his legs. About him stood an innumerable number of men and women, gaping, listening, and hearing very intensely : among them I observed some who strutted like crows in a gutter, and principally a very handsome-bodied man in the face, who held then a map of the world, and with little aphorisms compendiously explained everything to them ; so that those men of happy memories grew learned in a trice, and would most fluently talk with you of a world of prodigious things, the hundredth part of which would take up a man's whole life to be fully known."

Such was Marion's orthodoxy, and such was once the orthodoxy of Ulysses. But, to give Ulysses his due, it must be admitted that no man feels more profoundly and has a deeper insight than he into this doctrine of the Higher Orthodoxy—that there is an infinite difference between right and wrong, leading to infinite results ; and that, to use his own words, the heaven of the righteous is

secured against the wicked, "*as if by bolts and bars as strong as the attributes of God*". It is in matters of the Higher Gossip that he numbers noses in order to discover whether he is "*not prepared to say that such and such a thing might not be allowed to be said*". Was he named Ulysses after the Ulysses of the Epics or the Ulysses of the Dramas ?

Whether you are strictly orthodox or no, everybody says you are a fine fellow ; you look like it ; and I believe it. You take the part of the down-trodden ; you let your voice be heard for the oppressed. The utterance by a friend of a big, mouth-filling, round oath at gross oppression gives you great relief, since it would not do for you yourself to swear. The blessings of the crofters in the Highlands and Islands are on you ; prayers for you ascend from a thousand humble hearths ; a thousand horny hands would fain shake yours across the counties ; and, to relieve you, there are few honest Highland and Island Christian laymen but would swear

much. Rack-renting and evictions are a monstrous and abominable system, and it is because of that that the crofters have at last risen, and are determined to stand shoulder to shoulder, and to say that they will no longer tolerate that oppression. I am sure you will not rest till the crofter has fixity of tenure, fair rent, compensation for improvements, and some little share of the vast uninhabited tracts of country round about him, in order that he may live, pay his rent, and maintain himself by his honest industry.

I have, however, Amyntas, seen you apparently countenancing (but how could you well help it?) a man trying to half-stifle the mind. Last February (1884) I saw you among other notable shepherds in the Assembly Hall of the Free Hill of Zion Company, where a mechanically-learned teacher of shepherds (far more viewy than vital) went wading away wearisomely, the dreary man, through a soulless prelection, talking of the mighty Pan, the God of Shepherds, as a Grandee,

willing now this and now that, pouring out *more* of his spirit now, and *less* then, and intending to pour out *a good deal more* by-and-bye, a mixture between a busy spiritual politician, having to scheme, and balance, and calculate, and watch, and check, and promote things, according to circumstances, and a self-willed capricious monarch who, considering his power, acted in such a manner as showed that he did not know his own mind. One would have thought that, in the nineteenth century, in the Modern Athens, Pan might be better known. One would have expected that an intelligent audience might now be taught that the spirit of Pan has an inevitable process, free only in its own necessity, which is freedom itself, and that Pan's action is by no means the result of caprice tempered by reasoned debates with himself. But, as little Marion said, never mind that.

A great many people, Amyntas, think you a fine poet. You are certainly eloquent; and it was your eloquence that

took the half-crown out of my pocket. You were pleading the cause (if I rightly remember) of sheep in Africa. I had intended to give you a penny, perhaps a fourpenny-bit (to be genteel). A person, sitting next to me, who I am morally sure had meant to give you the brown twelfth part of sixpence, gave you a white shilling. You were then irresistible. I thought that old Demosthenes or Tully might have owned you for a brother. I was younger and more impressionable than I am now, and, as you see, more judicial than judicious. Still, you *are* eloquent.

I undertook to see this little book correctly printed, jocularly conditioning that the author would allow me to dedicate it; he seriously consented: hence this address. I should, perhaps, Amyntas, say more in your praise; and I would willingly do so; but my thoughts are drawn away to a different subject. I am, in fact, expecting a visit to-night, very soon, from a young man who has written requesting my advice. I wish he had

applied to you. The case would interest you even as a poet. This excellent young man is (I may mention) Marion's cousin. He has undergone great agony of mind in trying to decide whether he would be justified in marrying and begetting children who may have been decreed to everlasting punishment for their necessary, and unconscious, and exceedingly slender, ancient presence in Adam's loins. He is engaged to a young woman, who has no more scruple on the matter than Calvinistic divinity students, who usually marry almost as soon as ever they can get manes. He is very desirous to marry, if his conscience would let him. What do I know about such things? I will send him either to you or to Ulysses. I am not prepared to say that it is not a view that might not be held, that, if this considerate young man could, and without sin, decline to beget beings possibly decreed to damnation, it would be highly criminal not to decline. Better, surely, far better that all his children should

remain forever unbegotten, in a state of not uncomfortable nonentity, than that a single one of them should be born to be damned !

* * * * *

The young man has just left me, and in great perplexity and distress. To make the thing worse, the friends of the young woman threaten him with an action of breach of promise. I have sent him to you, telling him that, if you were not very busy poetising, you would, perhaps, be glad to help him. I have told him that, so far as I can see at present, if his children have been decreed to be damned, they certainly must and will be damned, whether he begets them or no ; while he, on the other hand, is strongly inclined to think, so far as he can see at present, that, if he begets none of them, few of them will run much risk.

HENRY THAINSBROOKE.

v

P R E F A C E.

WHOEVER should live *wholly* in the spirit in the following Essay would live in an element of perfect romance. If the Universe is Moral, a man who should make the improvement of his heart and conduct—the elevation of his own character and the good of others (two things inseparably united)—the aim of his life, and that with the utmost simplicity of sincerity, and consequently ever-growing energy of resolution, would never cease, though he had an incredible faculty of living long far beyond Methuselah's, to find his circumstances, whatever they might be, profoundly and unexhaustively interesting. For he could not live

in the spirit of the following Essay without living *originally*—that is to say, experimentally and tentatively, not mechanically, or by hearsay, or at random. A tree does not live either mechanically or at random, but with all the force of its limited nature, it endeavours to extend itself, and it is never found dawdling, or doing over again what it has already done, but it is always pressing on to something new in its unaccomplished development. A man living like the tree, but with this difference, that he is self-conscious spirit and practically unlimited, when he considers the romance of the tree, standing every spring, larger and larger, covered and crowned with green leaves and gay blossoms, and vocal with glad birds, from the petty seed that once it was, what might he hope for himself, finally, as a romance of man ! But a mechanical mode of life, life by hearsay, or living at random, shrivels and retards the soul, and ruins all but all human life's highest romance.

Now, to live in an element of perfect romance is the one desire of every human soul, for to live in an element of romance is, and alone is, happiness. To help men to live in such an element, to help men to live originally, to help men to happiness, is the object of the following Essay.

By originality we simply mean insight for oneself, action for oneself. To see for himself and to act for himself is what distinguishes a man who is truly a man from men in general and from sheep. Starting with goodwill, a man who insists on seeing for himself and on acting for himself gradually acquires a powerful and finely-categorizing spirit, a strong character, and a healthy and sensitive conscience—always, of course, in proportion not only to the energy and length of that insistence, but also to his native endowments of head and heart, which, we must loyally admit, differ so immensely in different men. The acquisition of this spirit and character and conscience gives a man the

sense of the highest possible kind of success ; in other words, gives him happiness. If success in business naturally and justly gives oftentimes a considerable degree of happiness even to a good man, a man of unenvious disposition and of earnest purpose, since success in business furnishes one not only with the means of life, but with abundance and security, and greater freedom for devotion to right living, success in right living itself necessarily gives, as it is found to give, the highest possible kind of happiness.

Originality of insight, *that* is the first thing, for, without it, originality of action would only be blundering. One may indeed happen to hit blunderingly on right action, but in that case the right thing will be wrongly done.

We shall give a very simple and homely illustration of what we mean by originality of insight, and shew how babes in science may, by trying to see for themselves, have that revealed to them which is hid from

the wise and prudent. There is a great deal of foolish writing and foolish talking about Evolution. We have mentioned Evolution in the following Essay, but we were not called upon by our argument to give our opinion regarding it, and we therefore did not give it; but we used terms which might doubtless lead a careless reader, a reader untrained to the suspension of his judgment, a reader who does not know that right reading is reproduction, to guess, without the means of guessing, that we disliked the doctrine of Evolution. Now, we—making, however, a distinction between what are the views of perhaps most Evolutionists and Evolution itself—we are inclined to favour that doctrine. The human race steadily increases in number and in acquirement of the arts of life, &c. : looking backward, then, think away, *abthink* the increase of the race and its acquirements, age after age, and if there was no evolution of man from a lower form, you necessarily come

to a time when there was one pair of human beings, or a few pairs, standing naked (in every sense), helpless big babies, without thought and without a language. You come to their first hour, to their first minute. They did not exist the minute before. Now, O Darwin-opposing Idealist, *where* did they so suddenly come from? Did they, the Conditioned, pop head-foremost, then and there, right out of the Absolute? No; you not only admit but contend that that is (as it is) *absolutely* impossible; as impossible, indeed, as you perfectly well know it would be for a God, a small object in infinite space, to form them from wet clay, lay them out upon a turf or set them up against a wall to dry, and then blow breath into their nostrils till they sneezed and lived. Well, but *where* did they come from? Are you, after gazing long, with a grave face, into the philosophical millstone as far as eye can see, prepared to give up jargon that defies the matter

more effectually than punning, and choose between colonization of the first human inhabitants of the earth from another planet, or evolution?—for, if these two are not the only things left for you to choose between, be so kind as to mention a third. But, were colonization in the least degree feasible, we would, by going in imagination to that other planet, and using the same process of argument about the human inhabitants there, arrive there at the first human inhabitants; and, unless you are prepared to regard human beings as having existed for ever from unbeginning time, and to have been spreading forever by colonization throughout the infinite universe, you necessarily come to evolution. But evolution, you say, presupposes *involution*, and so far you say right; but you do wrong by stopping there. It is virtually the very same question as this: Is the hen first or the egg? And would you not, O Darwin-opposing Idealist, be ashamed to look even a hen of

ordinary fair instinct in the face after saying that the egg is first, as if that helped to settle the business? Surely you would; and, if not, we would back her cackle against your jargon. But why, then, do you mention involution as if that helped to settle the question in regard to evolution? Evolution is, so to speak, the universal hen, and involution the universal egg. The difficulty is not solved in the slightest degree by evolution of the involved; for the difficulty is the difficulty of thinking a beginning, of getting at the first start. But COURAGE! I foresee that, if we are faithful, we shall soon find the matter, all of us, Darwinians and Idealists, or whatever we may call ourselves or be, as simple and easy of solution as is of practice easy and simple the method now discovered by which they catch lions in Africa.

There is *That Which Could Not But Be*: it is eternal; it is infinite. Being infinite, number cannot be applied to it:

it is not numerically one, nor more than one. Being eternal, it simply *is*, without past and without future. What we call the Past and the Future exist only in the Fantasy of men ; but an Eternal and Infinite Present forever *is*. In his intellect, man has a true and adequate and unalterable idea of this Eternal and Infinite Present ; in his senses, he has variable impressions of what to a certain extent is taking place in it. For *That Which Could Not But Be* could not be otherwise than active ; and, as it could not be otherwise than active, it could not be otherwise than possessed of power to give opposition to itself, since resistance is necessary to activity : hence what are termed Spirit and Matter. As it is absurd to suppose the First and Last Necessity or *That Which Could Not But Be* to act capriciously, its actual boundless activity of production, in what may be called the play of Spirit and Matter, could not be otherwise than it is. The very

nature of the Eternal and Infinite Present, then, is its ever-changingness ; it forever is what it is by forever changing as it does. But *That Which Could Not But Be* is infinitely capable, yet without reserve of power, since it is forever infinitely struggling with and overcoming infinite opposition. Now, we consider what we have just said to have the clearness, the manifest validity, of geometrical axioms, and that it follows, by necessary thought, that the boundless activity of *That Which Could Not But Be* is only evolution of its own infinite contents or nature (name as you will) : evolution by absolutely innumerable evolutions, and evolutions within evolutions, smaller and greater, throughout a boundless universe. And, in relation to the evolutions of *That Which Could Not But Be*, since they are infinite in number and in variety of extent, the evolution of a trifle of ten hundred thousand million million solar systems or so, with all the contents of those systems,

would be infinitely less than the evolution of a single honest hen from her native egg would be in relation to the evolution of so many (or any possible number of) solar systems. I think that a consideration of what we have just said might enable Theologians and Idealists to leave the good Darwinian to work in peace at his little, but interesting and instructive, study of evolution on this little planet, nine of which could be stuffed—and space to spare—into one of the cavities indicated by one of the smallest of the solar spots, just as a schoolboy can stuff nine little marbles with ease into his little waistcoat pocket. But, at any rate, surely to Darwinian and Idealist, and to every kind of reader, it must now be perfectly apparent that to think a beginning always was, is now, and ever will be, world without end, as simple and easy as the new method of catching lions in Africa: The desert consisting of sand and lions, you just put the whole together into a

sieve, sift out the sand, and the lions remain.

Old experience in seeing for oneself may even rise to the prophetic strain. An example : Professor Tait says* that notwithstanding the great triumphs of science, the smallest possible portion of matter (that is to say, matter itself) has not yet been seen. That is quite true ; and well is it for him that it is true. When a natural philosopher sees the smallest possible portion of matter—an indivisible particle—for the first time, he will see it also for the last ; for undoubtedly he will (among other curious things) see, in the

* “It would require the power of the microscope to be multiplied forty, fifty, and even a hundred fold, before we could have any chance of seeing the many particles of which the most homogeneous substances were made up. This shewed us what vast progress had yet to be made before we could actually see what matter was. We could tell how many trillion or quadrillion particles there were in a cubic inch of water, which was an enormous advance in science ; but we had still no information as to what each particle was.”—*The Scotsman*, October 30, 1884.

very centre of it, stretched out at full length and lolling at its ease (not ease like his who, sitting, a fat mass, on satin cushions, once asked, "Do I now sit or stand?"—no, but ease absolute), the Knowledge-that-two-and-two-make-four-throughout-all-possible-worlds, laughing away to itself at the idea of any power whatever commanding two and two to be five—and the sight will strike him DEAD. We know this by the spirit of prophecy, which is by no means yet gone. But we hasten to reassure Professor Tait's friends that *he* will not be that martyr. No; Professor Tait will never actually "*see*"—nor will even any of his successors in the Chair of Natural Philosophy ever actually "*see*"—what matter is, by any multiplication whatsoever of the power of the microscope, if matter is not already properly said to be seen by the naked eye. Were the power of the microscope multiplied a trillion fold, Professors would still look forward to the time when, by its

multiplication a quadrillion fold, they might get a peep of that *infinitely* coy creature, the smallest possible portion of matter, and so see what matter is !

Now, these are illustrations of what we mean by originality of insight : it does not mean seeing what other people do not see, though very probably indeed it may lead very often indeed to that ; it means seeing for ourselves what everybody (or nearly everybody) may see for himself, if he will only be enough sincere, and take the right method. But the illustrations given do not directly affect conduct : let us therefore take another. There is much foolish talking and foolish writing about Prayer. "Does God answer prayer?" it is asked. Now, examine the categories involved : *God, answer, prayer*. We have shewn in the following Essay, that God is ; but our God is the Bible God of Jesus himself, the Eternal *That Which Could Not But Be*, the true God, the God of Thought, not a God of the Senses or of

the Imagination. Now, whoever asks the question, "Does God answer prayer?" is thinking of a false God, a God of the Senses or of the Imagination, an Idol of his own or of others' making; for, if he were thinking of the true God of Thought, so foolish a question could not even occur to him. But thinking of that foolish Idol, what he means by *answer* and what by *prayer* is also foolish. If his God were the true God of Thought, he would know that the Universe is Moral, and that he cannot do anything whatsoever, great or little, without receiving in some (though certainly very often imperceptible) degree, reward or punishment in and by his conduct. In prayer, which should be an act of the most intense and earnest, though simple, kind, because one of man's highest possible acts, we necessarily receive a very important answer either of reward or punishment in every word and aspiration or want of aspiration. God answers true prayer, as

certainly as fire warms ; and as certainly as fire burns, God answers false prayer. Many or most people who talk of having received this and the other answer to their prayers have very probably been receiving all their life to all their prayers a terrible answer that they are too gross even to surmise. We are here reminded of having once heard a gushing Edinburgh Bailie relate in public the following extraordinary answer to prayer. He had been going as one of a deputation to London, and had lost some papers required. He searched in vain. "*I'll soon find them, papa,*" said his daughter. Away she went and prayed in secret, and in a few minutes returned with the papers. It had been divinely revealed to her to seek them in the Family Bible. Had this little sweet saint, so confident (and doubtless with cause) of such an answer, been under our authority, we should have felt ourselves bound, in endeavouring to bring her up "in the nurture and admonition

of the Lord," to give her something which would probably have effectually insured a different answer to her prayer another time. And when she had had a good cry out, not for nothing, we should, after some little time, have taken her apart, and sadly and affectionately asked her whether she did not now deeply regret her conduct in receiving that answer to her prayer ; and, on being assured, both by word and by manifest shame, that she did, we should have explained to her that the true God does not answer this girl and not the other girl, but that he answers all, and that the necessary divine answer to true prayer is an increase of a refining, refreshing, strengthening, elevating, joyful sense of the Divine Presence in the soul ; and that no one can yet truly pray who can say the thing is which is not, and, especially in regard to God, that such conduct is daringly wicked. We should then have made her promise that she would not again allow us to search in vain for our

papers, but, knowing where they were, run for them at once ; and, clapping her kindly on the head, we would have bid her be a good girl for the future. And we never would have referred to the matter again either in public or private.

Were there about us invisible beings who, seeing our faith and piety (not our presumption), could assist us at need (and we do not quite deny nor quite admit the existence of such beings), what *they* did for us would not be according to the necessary laws of prayer. It is with those necessary laws that we have just now to do ; and so certain is the operation of the laws of prayer, that other laws which are by no means uncertain in their operation might well be illustrated by them. The Duke of Argyll is the author of a book called *The Reign of Law*. We have never read it, but we suppose its doctrine is the true one, that Law reigns everywhere, even over the Duke himself and his factor in the Island of Tyree. In *The*

Scotsman recently (October 14, 1884), there is a report of a speech by Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh at Inverness. We dislike the *tone* of the speech—the very tone of the said Mr. Mackintosh when he sat on the Crofter Commission. We seem to hear in it something which tells us (without going to the window and looking for the direction of the smoke) that the east wind is blowing—and everybody knows the east wind is very personal, and so very uncomfortable and trying that Mr. Mackintosh in future should resolutely restrain his strong wind in the day of his east wind. But be that as it may, we refer to his speech for the purpose of quoting what he says on the Duke of Argyll and on law: “At this moment in the Island of Tyree the great bulk of the people are under no law whatever, but under the entire power and will of the Duke”; and, among many other things less to the Duke’s credit (most of which are denied by the Duke’s factor), he adds: “The

people are allowed to receive public charity—a state of matters of which the Duke of Argyll ought to be ashamed”. Mr Mackintosh (who does not mean to hint a profane pun in virtually saying that *the people are not under the Law but under his Grace*) has in view certain beneficent changes in the land laws, which his speech and other efforts, tone notwithstanding, will not fail to help to bring about, and practically his language is quite sufficiently correct ; and yet the Island of Tyree and the Duke and his factor form no exception to the rest of the universe; and it is not at all likely that in the next edition of his book his logical Grace will add a chapter *On Exceptions to the Reign of Law in the Island of Tyree*. No ; the people of that Island apparently may be said, if Mr. Mackintosh distantly approaches truth, to groan under law ; and as for the Duke himself, he is quite as truly under the unwritten inward laws of justice between man and man as

the Pharisees were, according to Jesus, under the unwritten inward laws of prayer, which surely, and irresistibly, and instantaneously, execute themselves : “ And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are ; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They HAVE their reward.”

But let us let the Duke alone to meditate on justice and on the law of love, if he so specially needs to do so as Mr. Mackintosh would lead us to suppose : at present we have only to do with the laws of prayer. The laws of prayer which Christ hints at are but little known, but, as we know their source, *this* we do know—that they are in their operation beneficent, instantaneous, inevitable, universal. By “ universal ” we mean that, the conditions which put them in operation being fulfilled by man, they execute themselves for one just as for another; like the law of

gravitation, without respect of persons. We may say that, if the rays of a divine answer do not warm and illuminate your soul in prayer, it is because of a cloud, of the rise and size and density of which, on close and faithful enquiry, you will generally be able enough to give yourself a sufficient account. The laws of prayer are spiritual, and an answer to prayer can only affect external and material things, if at all, indirectly. Suppose a pious crofter, in the Island of which we have just been speaking, the Island of Tyranny, as, if Mr. Mackintosh were right, it might be called, has enough elevation of soul to pity the Duke of Argyll, not with contemptuous pity, holding that unlawful, but with loving pity, as understanding so little his own true interest in his brief—we were going to say brief *lease* of time, but the Duke is a tenant-at-will, like far too many of his own tenants—suppose this pious crofter, groaning under some of the laws that there are in the Island,

succinctly termed *the Duke's will*, with groanings that cannot be uttered for fear of the factor—suppose he prays continually, and fervently, and secretly, for the Duke, no answer will be sent in favour of the Duke, but great verily will be the man's own reward. The only chance of the Duke benefiting by his tenant's prayer would be by overhearing it.* But suppose a tenant, groaning inwardly with groanings that cannot be uttered, were to pray, in the simplicity of his heart, that his rack-rented croft might be made to yield so much more as would enable him to pay some little debts that he had been forced

* Everything is under the reign of law, and there are laws of laughter. The Duke used to be very frequently prayed for by Highlanders, to the amusement of the whole country. There are also laws of indignation, and if the Duke (Mr. Mackintosh even approaching truth) is now prayed for in the Highlands, we fear that the old formula has been altered by the omission of *pless* and the introduction of *tamn*. The old formula was: "Cot pless ta Thuke off Arkhyll". It is to be feared that but few will now regard the posts with gratitude.

to incur and could not clear, his faith in God would have its certain reward, but the laws of prayer do not dominate the laws of the agricultural department.

The man, then, who is able to put himself into a right relation to *That Which Could Not But Be*, to the FATHER of Jesus, in prayer, according to the laws of prayer, will be answered graciously, according to those laws; and if he tampers with those laws, without being in that right relation, he will suffer. In the one case, God "cannot withhold his conquering aid"; in the other, he not only cannot give it, but he must give something else. This is why people have to be *taught* to pray. And among the things to be taught is, first of all, this—that, in coming to God, you must believe that he is, that he necessarily rewards unselfish and unweariedly diligent seeking of him, and that he is nearer you than your own body :

“Speak to him, thou, for he hears; and spirit with
spirit can meet :

Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than
hands and feet.” *

If the reader shall now accuse us of having introduced the subjects of Evolution, Dreaming Awake of seeing Matter ITSELF, and Prayer, rather for their own sakes than for the sake of illustration, we need not care to deny it. What we have written is perhaps good reading. But one other word on Prayer : The source of right action may be truly said to be prayer : we speak not here of words, but of “*unceasing* prayer”—a nearer relation of the soul to God than the root of a plant has to the soil. Such a conscious relation of a spirit results, among other things, in this, that history and nature become to it nothing but a revelation and vision of God, not speaking in metaphor, but speaking with scientific simplicity. This is the highest of all facts. “In

* Tennyson.

him we live and move and have our being."

We again assert that whoever should live *wholly* in the spirit of our Essay would live in an element of the highest possible romance. In pain, in poverty, in disgrace, in whatever trials may assail the soul, there must be something, and there is, to carry it triumphantly on to complete victory. That something is true Christianity, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO CHRIST. What that Gospel is, in its fulness, nearly two milleniums have failed to show. The Gospel according to Christ is the Divinity of Man and the Humanity of God. What Christ expresses mystically, we have philosophically proven: "I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you". Or, according to John (Ep. I. ch. iv.): "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit."

The Universe is Moral, then, and the high calling of Christ is Perfection : “ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye ? do not even the publicans the same ? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others ? do not even the publicans so ? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Putting aside the location of the Father, the notion of reward, and the confounding of love with liking, these are most glorious words, to be forever meditated. A few remarks on Perfection may be

of use to the reader, and not out of place :

(1.) We define Perfection to be the vital habit of incessant activity in the acquisition and use of what is highest and insusceptible of division, namely, knowledge and love. This activity is the only true freedom.

(2.) How is it to be approximately attained ? There must be a desire after it, and, in order that there should be a desire, it must be known to be what is best. This desire and knowledge are capable of degrees ; but a high degree of this knowledge could not exist without the desire being at least sometimes more or less intense. Before a vital habit of incessant activity can approximately exist, what opposes it unduly must be suppressed, and cannot be suppressed until this desire becomes the master-passion.

(3.) If the desire to attain it is awakened in no degree in a soul before which the clear reasons that prove it to

be best are plainly placed, that soul belongs to the irrevocably mean.

(4.) When once the desire is awakened in a soul, that soul can never afterwards find its satisfaction in lower things ; but it may through life be more or less tossed between the higher and the lower. This arises from the desire not becoming the master-passion.

(5.) But the desire, once roused, would always become the master-passion, if the object of the desire were persistently and lovingly and admiringly contemplated.

(6.) But the desire, though it has become the master-passion, may fail of its object. This must arise from the method to win it being a wrong one.

(7.) If the method to win it is a wrong one, it arises from inadequate knowledge of the true way.

(8.) After the desire, the first thing is the attainment of adequate knowledge of the true way, if this is possible ; and it is possible ; but who makes it his chief

business? who gives as much time to its attainment as every apprentice to a tailor or a shoemaker gives to learn his trade?

(9.) The first glimpse of Perfection having awakened desire, contemplate the beauty of Perfection unceasingly, admiringly and lovingly, sure that, by doing so, your desire will increase till it becomes your master-passion, taking the charm out of everything else, that is, out of everything that does not tend to establish and adorn Perfection, and giving in your eyes to everything that makes against it something of repelling and ugly.

(10.) But if the will is weak (and no one's will perhaps is sufficiently strong), means must be employed to strengthen it. Exercise will strengthen it.

(11.) As the pursuit of Perfection excludes rivalry, it excludes the evil passions that arise from the pursuit of things that cannot be enjoyed without diminishing another's share.

(12.) With the steady pursuit of Per-

fection, a man enters the way of freedom. He begins to be free ; and, longing much after perfect freedom, he must strive hard. He has to learn how to make the most of his life. His physical health must therefore become a prime object, and also how to make the most of time.

(13.) People generally live without aim and without plan, or shift from aim to aim and from plan to plan, or, having an aim, they pursue it languidly and intermittently. But what might not anyone become who, with undivided heart, aimed at Perfection (knowing well at the same time that it can neither be fully attained in thought or deed), according to one great, well-studied, settled, wise plan, from day to day, and from year to year, overcoming difficulty after difficulty, adding virtue after virtue to his life and character !

(14.) Had Jesus merely called men to the pursuit of Perfection, it would have been indeed a sad high calling ; but Jesus made Great Practical Discoveries, and

shewed how that high calling can be successfully and joyfully worked out.

(15.) The chief of these Great Practical Discoveries is this: *God will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

In the following Essay, we claim to have done what no one hitherto has yet done. Fichte's *Kritik aller Offenbarung* we have never read, but its doctrine we judge, from a long analysis of it, to be quite different from ours, and utterly inadequate. In the course of our one-and-manifold argument, we claim to have established, beyond serious question, though not beyond quibble (which nothing is beyond)—

(1.) That God necessarily is, as being *That Which Could Not But Be.*

(2.) That, the Universe being infinite, God is not numerically one.

(3.) That God possesses unity of nature.

(4.) That the doctrines of Creation and Design are absurd.

(5.) That man from the first is a rising being.

(6.) That the Fall is only a Pauline and not a Bible doctrine.

(7.) What the real nature is of all possible revelation.

(8.) What the Higher Gossip is.

(9.) What the Higher Orthodoxy is.

(10.) That no book can be inspired.

(11.) What Reading really means.

(12.) How the nature of Intelligence necessitates a divine revelation.

(13.) That the highest possible divine revelation was made by Jesus Christ.

(14.) That man is a being, in his very nature, of ineffable dignity.

We claim to have established, among other things, these (but not in the order here given), in the course of a single argument made for establishing the Seventh, namely, *the real nature of all possible revelation.*

We have attributed the word *That Which Could Not But Be* to Dr. Stirling. We considered it one of his many feats of expression—the result of his philosophic and poetic genius combined, but we find it to be substantially a translation from a German writer. We knew that the thought expressed in that great word was not first Dr. Stirling's, nor any German's either—it is the *one* thought of Spinoza, and it appears, though less consciously, earlier in philosophy, not to mention religion. It was, we well remember, a glimmering and troubled and troubling light to our own early boyhood in the Greek saying, "Necessity is above the Gods". Having mentioned Dr. Stirling's name, we must partially discharge a debt of gratitude, and we hope to benefit some readers, by saying that the *Secret of Hegel* is one of the two or three most educative books that we ever read. There are many philosophical writers, but few masters; and it is *mastery* that struck

not only Carlyle and Emerson, but that strikes every reader so strongly in Stirling. You soon feel that you are engaged with a mind that has a vast number of deep and widespread roots. In the great quality of *intensity*, he is now, we believe, unrivalled; and, to quote the fine criticism of the *Edinburgh Review*, his works are "luminous throughout, with a light that shines from beneath rather than over the surface". We know an earnest student who is so struck with his intensity that he calls him THE STIRLINGIAN ENERGY. It is a just title.

But we return again for a moment to that with which we set out; and we say that every man, by living *wholly* in the spirit of our Essay, might reach happiness, and might even have Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled in himself:

*The sun shall be no more thy light by day,
Neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto
thee,*

*But the ETERNAL shall be unto thee an everlasting
light,
And thy God thy glory.
Thy sun shall no more go down,
Neither shall thy moon withdraw itself,
For the ETERNAL shall be thine everlasting light,
And the days of thy mourning shall be ended.*

But that prophecy could never be fulfilled
in a man who lives in external categories.

Why this prating of *where* ?
There is no Here and There
For the Soul, but for Things—
And the Slave who still clings
To the Clod :
Here-below is Above,
If you live but in Love,
In Communion
And Union
With God.

What a romance is Man ! How strong
he is, how weak ! how wise, and what a
fool ! a worm, and a god ! What a
mystery without and within ! Whose
thoughts wander through infinite Space,
and through whose senses, as through a
five-fold channel, Time and all the things

borne along on Time's broad bosom, swiftly rush! To whom without is within, and within is without! In whose frail and fleeting physical form, crushed before the moth, there is an undying spirit capable of friendship with the Highest God, who has wonderfully endowed him for it; for in Man, everlasting infinite Man, in the innermost of his wondrous nature, there is the throne of Will, and the high council-chamber of Reason, and the court of Conscience, and the bower of Love; and God desires to sit with Will on the throne, and with Reason in the council-chamber, and with Conscience in the court, and with Love in the bower; for that bower, without him, shall not be pure, nor shall it ever know what love in its highest means and is; for, without him, that court, basely bribed, shall corruptly judge; for, without him, in that high council-hall, wisdom shall not guide; for, without him, on that throne there shall be no

majesty, but a giddy, reeling, reckless, self-willed tyrant shall be the ruin of the realm : but Man, because of his capability for the friendship of God, has the dread power of expelling him from them all, and of refusing him entrance. What a romance is Man ! Is not this mad earth as if a lunatic asylum among the planets ? And the few sane dwellers in it, who know indeed that God is God, are not they those who, in some measure, keep the sin-struck (worse, how far, than moon-struck) in order ? What city on the earth's surface but has its lazar-houses, its mad-houses, its gambling and worse than gambling-houses, its drinking-houses, its haunts of thieves, its low theatres, its prisons, its armies enlisted in the Devil's night-service, and its whole streets seething masses of ignorance, vice, and misery !—on the earth's surface, where the Beautiful Feet brought their Gospel now nearly nineteen hundred years ago, but where the Gospel of the Beauti-

ful Feet has been so woefully ill preached, that the most Christian city anywhere is yet to-day but the least Heathen, and has its whole streets where the imbruted human face and form so frequently recall the dog, the pig, the fox, the monkey, and the bear! and, alas, its churches, where half-learned chatter, primly perked in the pulpit, displays, to decently-attentive respectability, the last new view of the claims of John's Gospel, or in a logic-mill grinds into dust for the wind the grain that was given for seed, and where warm wisdom should discourse to the rapt and kindling pew the life-giving Gospel only according to Christ! What a romance is Man! What winds of passion, from what caves of Hell, raise what storms in the human breast! Look at the gathered might of two Christian nations meeting, on some great day of Death, on the battle-field. Does God, leaning on the crystal wall of Heaven, when his eye catches this earth, see elsewhere here, or

in other worlds has he ever seen, such a sight? Born in anguish, with death to many a loving mother, baptised into Christ all of them (so far at least as water went), reared up into manhood through long years of labour and expense, not of purse only but of heart and brain, there march these Christians—stretching out, of course, to each other, like Christians, the arms of faith and love? If so, how is it that the narrowing space between them is filling faster and faster with horror as they march, till at last they pause, and the space seems to be filled full with horror as with a solid, though invisible, thing? They have arms indeed, but they are the arms not of faith and love, but of destruction; and, on signal given, they send blast on blast of iron hail, with loud terrific fury, into each other's ranks; and the dead and dying lie thick as autumnal leaves on the ground, and a heavy shower of souls falls in Hell; and the conqueror in a temple sings praises for his victory to

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And God sees and hears it all, and keeps his unbroken silence, and works out, from age to age, through the sin and folly, as through the wisdom and holiness, of men, his eternal and unfathomable, but not all impenetrable, purposes. What a romance is Man ! Low as Hell, he reaches high as Heaven. For there are men too, here and there, who have transcended the limits, on the heavenly side, of their moral nature, whose love has become infinite as the love of Christ, or as the love of Paul when he cried, Would to God that I were accursed from Christ for others ! For the love has reached infinity that would be crushed for its cause. And then is man indeed, as the Bible calls him, the glory of God, and worthy then, but then only, of his friendship, and to work with him as his fellow. Then sits God on the throne of Will, and by his power secures its stability against all assaults ; in the council-hall of Reason, and inspires and

guides her by the glad wisdom that was with him, the Ancient of Ages, from everlasting ; in the court of Conscience, and the unbribed unerring judge, at need, consults the Living Fountain itself of Law ; and in the bower of Love too sits he then, in his uncreated beauty, but veiled, that the eyes of the soul may, though strengthened, endure to behold it, and to the enraptured soul, at the sight and contemplation of it, unutterable delights are made known, worthy of sacred silence. What a romance is Man !

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ALL POSSIBLE REVELATION.

1. THE old dramatist, John Marston, has humorously and felicitously expressed the experience of perhaps a majority of those who have in all ages devoted themselves for a time to the study of mental philosophy. A scholar applies himself for seven years to making quotations of the opinions that had been held and combated concerning the soul of man. "The more I learnt," says he, "the more I learnt to doubt." Meanwhile Delight, his spaniel, sleeps. The scholar earnestly continues his labour, ardently hopeful that one or other of so many metaphysicians, intensely gazing, as it were, at their own spiritual navels, may have discovered something incontrovertibly true and important; he pores over and bores through many musty volumes, probably heavy but not weighty, diligent and thorough as a book-worm, or *Laus*, as the Germans call it, wasting much lamp-oil, wearying his baited flesh, while his

veins shrink up ; and still his spaniel, Delight,
snoozes away delightfully comfortable ;

“ And still I held converse with Zabarell,
Aquinas, Scotus, and the musty saw
Of antick Donate” ;

and still the spaniel sleeps, giving way to nature ; and still the scholar pursues his enquiries, or watches the factious philosophers firing brain-bullets, and delivering intellectual fisticuffs, and spitting toads and serpents at each other, when contradiction has gone to their heads like drink ; and still the spaniel sleeps outright, or at least slumbers, with one eye quite shut, and the other very nearly so ; and still the scholar goes on, or tries his best to do it, very anxious to see, if possible, to the back of Beyond, terribly puzzled on the subject of the will, not knowing whether it is free, or a puppet pulled by invisible strings, and even often tied down or bound by invisible thongs ; and he reads, quotes, observes, pries, and peeps about, and in and out, and fills large note-books ; and all this time the spaniel, giving way to nature, snoozes comfortably in his warm hairy hide, and, says the scholar, with uncommon candour,

“ At length he waked, and yawned ; and, by yon sky,
For aught I know, he knew as much as I”.

What, then, was the total result of this scholar's labour, or rather intellectual debauchery? He had wasted many precious years of his life in making his mind lose its grip; for, says he, "the more I learnt, the more I learnt to doubt".

2. But was this unhappy result in anywise necessary, owing to the nature of mind? So far are we from thinking this the case, that we undertake an argument, as simple as conclusive, that shall settle forever the highest of all questions in regard to man. We shall shew the unspeakable dignity of his nature, and wherein it consists; that there is not in kind, that there cannot be, in the whole universe, any higher being; and this we shall do in the course of an investigation, exhaustive and final, wherein we shall establish, on a foundation never to be shaken, the philosophy of all possible revelation. We shall aim at being as concise as may consist with being both clear and popular; for, though not for the million, metaphysics may be written for all thoughtful people. We distrust everything that cannot be written in plain language; and what we have to say shall be, for the most part, in the plainest language that we can reach, almost devoid of technical terms. We write indeed for the learned, but also for those of the unlearned, and they are many, who wish to know something certain about them-

selves, and their surroundings, from direct insight; and who have not yet lost, through intellectual debauchery, the capacity of belief. To ensure simplicity, I will suppose myself to be addressing an unsophisticated ploughman, one who is by nature a man of heart and intellect, who loves to read and think, who has a strong sense of his own greatness as a man, though apprehending this greatness not very clearly, and scarcely so able perhaps to express it in words as by actions.

3. I request my reader, then, this honest ploughman, or whoever he may be (and my writing will be scientific enough for any reader), to consider his mind as being completely cleared of all that he has ever learned, or supposes that he has learned, and to admit into his mind, while he reads this book, nothing whatever but what he thoroughly understands, and not to pass a paragraph till he has made it his own, which in general, if not always, will be an easy thing for him to do. There must be no hearsay.

4. Now, look at your hands: examine them closely; consider the fingers, the joints, the nails; see how the thumbs are placed. Gaze at these hands of yours till you see them as if you saw them for the first time, that is to say, with astonishment and awe. Custom has made

them so common to you, as it has made the other wonders of the universe, that it is with difficulty that you can see them as if you saw them for the first time. Persist in gazing, however, and you will certainly accomplish this. Having accomplished it, consider a cart or a plough! You suddenly behold a truth, or rather the truth of all truths, in light, and in and by its own light, and you probably exclaim, *There is a God!* Your honest, undebauched, unabused intellect is open to the truth, and it enters, but you fail in precision of thought and expression. We cannot yet, in this paragraph, say that God is, but let us hope to arrive at that—a glorious goal for you and for me; for then we may have light in the heart as well as in the brain, and know where to place our highest love, which we shall by no means call “cosmic emotion”. You saw in the cart or plough, those rude works, sufficient evidence of design; and what in your hands? Evidence unspeakably greater *not of design*, but of something unnameable by you, which, whatever it be, is not lower than design, but higher.*

5. If there were simple design shewn by your hands, there must be a designer of them, as design cannot be conceived as existing otherwise than in a designer, any more than pain

* See Appendix, Note I.

can be conceived separate from a suffering subject ; but your hands are so strikingly different from—and in kind higher than—any work implying design, especially when you consider your hands in relation to the rest of your body, and your whole body in relation to the world, as to prove something, as yet unnameable, or at least unnamed, unspeakably greater than design ; for your hands and body grew, and were not mechanically fashioned. This something could no more exist of itself than design or pain could ; and therefore there is what exercises this something, whatever that What may be.

6. We have come to a certain conclusion, and a very important one ; and we must pause to consider whether or no the intellect of man is capable of arriving at conclusions possessing perfect validity ; in other words, whether or no man is capable of knowing. But if we should decide that he is not capable of knowing, or that we know not whether or no he is capable of knowing, we would act absurdly, since the very decision itself, to be valid, would prove the contrary. Man is, therefore, capable of knowledge, or of coming to conclusions that are perfectly valid. There are questions of practical judgment, however, and questions of pure or necessary thought. I can never be absolutely

sure that I do right in taking the side of the Whigs or of the Tories; I can only be morally sure; but I know, with absolute certainty, that I am right in thinking that, where two things are parallel with a third, they must be parallel with each other. In this discourse, so far as argumentative, it is with necessary thought alone that we have to do, and no conclusion whatever must be come to that can be escaped. If any objection occurs, it must be removed; every hostile thought must be faced, pursued to its last recesses, disarmed, and made to yield.

7. When you have arrived at anything as the result of necessary thought, consider whether any amount of mere authority, however respectable, or beyond all respectability, would overturn that result in your mind. Would a whole army of angels, each asserting that there were worlds where two and two made five or fifteen, shake for a single moment your absolute knowledge that that is impossible, and that two and two can never anywhere make less or more than four? Would a voice sounding through the firmament, confirming the assertion of the angels, and accompanied by the most fearful thunder and lightning, shake that knowledge for a moment? Your flesh and blood might tremble, your tongue, Galileo-like, might contradict the truth, but your intellect would be

perfectly firm, and think, "Two and two make four yet and forever". Nay, your heart would be filled with amusement, if in such circumstances seemingly too dangerous, really too deep also, for laughter. You would perhaps think that hell had broken loose, and that the devils were amusing themselves in practically quizzing those who imagine that truth (and consequently falsehood and error) could be divinely confirmed by a display of power. Would the assertion of a man, whom you had witnessed raising the dead to life, be effectual? Would the assertion, directly addressed to you, of a Being of ineffable majesty, sitting on a great white throne, built high in the empyrean, and surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand angels, have more effect? Not the slightest! And why? Because you have a pure, and necessary, and perfect, and infinite knowledge of this, for one thing, that two and two make four. Let us hear no more, then, of the weakness of human reason. Human reason is infinitely strong.

8. It is admitted, of course, even by the vulgar (by whom I mean those only who have mean and inadequate notions of human nature, a class including many clergymen and others of so-called learning), that man is God's greatest work on earth; and yet many of them think to

exalt God by degrading and vilifying man, as we see by such expressions as "Oh, what grace to worms!" Whereas it would rather be to exalt and praise God to praise his greatest work. Who would think to please an artist by disparaging his greatest poem or painting? If man is a worm, he is a very curious one indeed; and the only one, so far as I know, capable (to say no more, at the present stage of our discourse) of absolute and infinite knowledge.

9. Man is, then, as being capable of knowledge to perfection, a being of the most wonderful dignity; and the conclusion is inevitable, that, if there were a God, man is altogether worthy of any revelation that God could make to him.

10. Suppose that there were only a single human being on this little planet, and that throughout all the boundless universe besides there was not one other thinking being, what would all the suns and systems together be in comparison to him! That single human being, though he lived but one day, or for one hour, would confer on those vast heaps of shining dirt their only value. And this little planet, as the dwelling-place of that single ephemeral but thinking tenant, would infinitely surpass in dignity and importance the infinite universe besides. That one thinker would not be little

relatively to all worlds, but all worlds would be great or little relatively to their use to him.

11. But suppose that those endless myriads of vast worlds are not in vain, but all of them, like our own green little globe, the homes of thinking beings, and supply, so to speak, a physical basis of spiritual life, it does not tend in the slightest to reduce the dignity of man, since those thinking beings would give to those endless myriads of worlds the only value they could possess, and would themselves possess worth, only by their participation in the qualities that constitute man, namely, thought and love.

12. We came to the conclusion that man, by having the capacity of infinite or perfect knowledge, is manifestly worthy of any revelation that God, if there were a God, could make to him. But man is also capable of unlimited love. There have been men whose love transcended limit, who have been ready, and who have longed, to sacrifice themselves for their cause. We need say no more of the greatness and worth of man.

13. Though you have not yet been forced to admit the being of God, and you are to admit nothing but what you are forced to admit in and by the process of necessary thought, you have arrived at Somewhat (whatever that may

be) exercising something which we cannot name, but which is clearly immeasurably higher than what we call design, and therefore requires, if it could only obtain, another name for proper and adequate expression. You arrived at this simply by looking at your hands, the awful divine vision of your hands. But what shall we say of that something when we consider your eyes and that which looked out at your hands through your eyes? This living locomotive house, of which your hands form a part, is inhabited; and the inhabitant is the wonderful being whose thought and love, and consequent greatness and worth, we have just considered, namely, *you*. You are the unity of thought and love; you possess character; you call yourself a person, an individual; you say *I*. You not only say, My field, My house, My body, but also, and more emphatically, My soul: you are capable of self-ownership. Every other creature known to you is ridiculously below you, as appears at once by applying to the highest of them, the "half-reasoning" elephant, as it has been called, the terms *individual*, *person*, *character*. No other creature can own anything, because it cannot own itself. It does not possess its instinct, but is possessed by it. Even an elephant cannot say to itself of itself *I*, having no self-reflection, self-consciousness,

reason. It has only simple consciousness and instinct, which strictly speaking are not its own.

14. But this unity of thought and love saying *I*, this personality, individuality, character, self-consciousness, with consequent self-ownership, and ownership of other things, has, with these ownerships, a sense of responsibility, conscience. You, this wonder of wonders, looking through your wonderful eyes at your wonderful hands, a short while ago were not, at anyrate in this world, and you have no recollection of having been anywhere else before, and again a little while and you will not be here. You, this personality, a self-owner, with conscience, rose to being, at anyrate to consciousness and self-consciousness, some little time ago in a little matter (as it is called) curdled like milk in your mother's womb. You could not make yourself, and your father and mother did not make you, any more than, by placing an egg beneath a brooding hen, the hen-wife made the chicken that sprang from it. You were produced by that Somewhat, whatever it may be, at which we arrived; and when you look, not now to your hands, but to your personality, it is more than abundantly evident that the Somewhat exercises a something unspeakably superior to design. A watchmaker designs and makes a watch: the production of a man is not higher

than the watchmaker's work, as for instance an inspired painter or poet's work is higher, but is altogether out of comparison with it or with any work with which design has anything to do.

15. An unconscious but striking testimony to the reverence with which we regard personality is furnished by the fact that the word *person* is seldom, if ever, applied without qualification to those who are under twenty or even somewhat over. We say "*young person*"; and if it were a question of censure, especially of severe censure, or punishment incurred, it would be felt to be rather harsh and unfeeling not to use the qualifying word. For personality here implies, not an assumed character to be played on a stage by an actor, with hand-clapping or hisses for success or failure in the imitation, but a real character to be developed throughout all life by an immortal spirit, with eternal issues of the most blessed or awful nature. And even in the face of many grievous errors we still have hope for the young, and rightly attribute much to giddiness and thoughtlessness rather than to wilful perversity and real badness of heart.

16. I am purposely delaying the rapid development of my argument, mindful of the proverb, The more haste, the less speed. The whole might perhaps be put into a few sentences; but the same thing in another manner

is not the same thing. Let the reader read on trustfully, but taking nothing on trust.

17. Some little time ago (at the longest) you rose into existence in a little matter curdled like milk in your mother's womb, and you expanded every moment of the night and day for nine months, and were born a small helpless baby, with five untrained senses, with a brain blank, and an empty heart. Surrounded by love and watchful intelligence, you gradually learned to distinguish things by sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch, and, by native power of category, the essential characteristic of Spirit, growing more and more conscious, aided by a language taught you, embodying the realized spirit of ages, you learned not only to distinguish, but to know them, and to know them better and better. What was your spirit at birth? Empty form merely, we may call it, or, better, a simple potentiality of spirit, capable of self-realization. Consider your mind for a little under this aspect, as something that has been filled, or as something realized. Your spirit has realized itself by what may be called its filling, as the ideal apple-tree in the apple-seed has realized itself by sucking from the soil and the surrounding atmosphere what accorded with its nature, and there in the garden in spring, with a thick trunk, and with boughs hanging in the

air with their multitudinous leaves and blossoms shedding fragrance, it stands a green and white permanent cloud, a vision and a wonder, just as your ideal spirit stands realized by its knowledge of various kinds. The growth of your spirit by increase of knowledge has gone on from birth; and if you think away, if you *ab*think, backwards, that increase, month by month, or year by year, what are you doing but thinking of your spirit as shrinking back from its realized fulness to its empty potentiality in the baby fresh from the womb?

18. But no other animal realizes an ideal spirit; because every mere animal is destitute of the essential characteristic of Spirit, namely, the faculty of categorizing. No mere animal, and just from the simple want of that faculty, is free, but acts by impulse, ruled by the particular and the immediate, incapable even of suspending or controlling its instinct for one moment. It is, though in a different fashion, driven and drawn as truly as a door-nail, and as if it were dead like that. It is, in the words of Isaiah, "flesh and not spirit". It knows nothing; no dog can say to itself, "I am a better dog than that dog," "I am swifter and stronger than that dog," or "I am an ill-used dog"; and the so-called "half-reasoning" elephant, on seeing a crow fly past him and

croak for the thousandth time, can only have the momentary vague sensation as of a black flying cry in the air.*

19. The mere potentiality of spirit which you were at birth would be, if unrealized, below the instinct of perhaps most animals at that stage, and immensely below that of some of them; a chicken, for instance, is born almost fully equipped for life, and you will sometimes see it running and feeding unaided with the shell still sticking to its tail. Consider, for a moment, this wonder—that the strongest of all things known to us, spirit, is originally as weak as the weakest. Spirit potential, as known to us in this world, could not continue and develop without the long protection and help of spirit realized.

20. Spirit is the strongest of all things, and from birth proceeds to develop itself, by reducing into itself, through knowledge, the external universe. We say *external* universe, provisionally; for we are to admit nothing but what we are forced to admit. And certainly we experience nothing whatever out of us. All our experience is within. Animals, plants, the earth, the sky, all things whatever, are seen by us within; all sounds, the chirp of a sparrow, the roar of the thunder, are heard by us within; all smells, all tastes, all touches, are within.

* See Appendix, Note II.

The world of the senses, equally with the world of the spirit, is within.

21. You must now fully realize this: you cannot by any means reach out of yourself. Believe that there is a world out of yourself, or not, just as you please, at present: we have nothing to do with that. What we know, and are forced to admit, is that all things whatever, including your own body, are, as you know them, within you. You experience all that you experience of an outward world, or of a supposed outward world, in your senses. We have nothing whatever to do at present with the fact whether or no there is an outward world, and having nothing to do with it, we neither admit nor deny it. If there is an outward world, you can never know it without, but only within. Before going farther, you must fully realize this, and the matter really presents no difficulty.

22. For the sake of convenience, however, we shall speak of the world as external. The outward world, then, you make your own, so far as you make it your own, through your senses only. This outward world has a two-fold relation to you: it furnishes you with the means of supporting your body, and with the means of realizing your spirit. The former is subsidiary to the latter: you cannot live well unless you first live. The outward world, there-

fore, is there only for the sake of Spirit, since its relation to Spirit is what gives it at last its only value.

23. "There is nothing in the intellect," it has been said, "but what was first in the senses"; a most unhappy saying, proverbial as it has become. Some one added, "except the intellect itself," which does not mend the matter; and indeed the saying itself presupposes that. The saying is altogether slovenly, shewing the thought to have been without clearness and precision. There is nothing in the intellect that ever was in the senses; and what the writer was driving at is this, that nothing would have been in the intellect, had there been nothing first in the senses; which is true. Spirit is realized by the intellect operating, so to speak, on the contents of the senses; and is excited to action only by what has been presented to it by them. We have now arrived at the proper place for clearly explaining how spirit realizes itself.

24. As with the individual, so with the race: if you think away, if you *abthink*, backwards, age by age, every triumph of spirit realizing itself in sciences, arts, and religions, with, at the same time, of course, the increase of the race in numbers from age to age, you necessarily arrive at a time when you have emptied the human

spirit of all its acquisitions, when you have reduced it to a mere potentiality of spirit standing perfectly ignorant in the presence of boundless nature.

25. We seem, at first sight, to come in contact here with the greatest of all philosophical difficulties, and one demanding of us a solution, namely, the difficulty of thinking a beginning; but such is not the case. We care not at present how a beginning took place, or whether it can be thought: all that we have to do is to find out the necessary process of spirit in its going forth from the first, conquering and to conquer nature. We care nothing here, therefore, for the evolution-theory or for any other theory. But, in passing, we may say that the very farthest possible stretch of the evolution-theory, supposing it even to be true, would not give the very slightest assistance to thinking a beginning; for evolution presupposes involution. Nothing can be evolved that was not involved. And do not foolishly fancy that, by giving man a tail, you would *simply put an end to him*. Man would be not less man, though he walked on four or fourteen feet, with a shaggy hide, a tail, and a head of horns to boot: man is man by thought and love.

26. Nor have we anything whatever to do at present with the account of the creation of man

given in the book of Genesis. We shall examine that account before we have done. Meanwhile we have only to consider the first pair, or pairs, standing blank before nature, and making some progress, however slight, towards knowledge; the first family, or families, inheriting to some extent the experience of their parents, and making some advances of their own; and so on, along the whole course of history, till to-day, when spirit is still striving, and more vigorously than ever, to realize itself and subdue nature by knowledge. It would be very easy, but very useless in relation to our argument, to expatiate here: it is enough to state the fact that the progress of the whole race, in developing and realizing itself, must exactly resemble the progress of a single individual, who, from stage to stage, as the race from age to age, advances with increased power and freedom to new victories of knowledge.

27. We began our argument, at paragraph Number 4, by looking at our hands, and we kept gazing at them till we looked away the vulgarising effects of custom, and saw them to be the dumb-striking wonders which they really are. We found that the consideration of our hands alone led us with certainty to the fact that there is a Somewhat exercising something ineffably higher than design. But, in

relation to that unnameable something, our hands in themselves almost sank into insignificance when we thought of the living house of which they form a part, when we thought of the spirit dwelling in that house, a being capable of knowing infinitely or perfectly and of unlimited love, and whose nature gave to the whole boundless external universe the only value which the whole boundless external universe could possess. But what shall we think of that something which is ineffably above design (since design is shewn by a plough or a cart), when we consider the spirit in its living house as being but one of the race, whose only business, as spirit, has been from the beginning the realization of itself, in thought and love, each individual as a self-owner, first for himself, and then for the whole ; the race transmitting, from the beginning, from age to age, in languages, sciences, arts, religions, the results of their triumphant labours, for the advantage of after-comers, who now start no longer like the first man or men, but as if they were already thousands of years old ; what shall we think of that ineffable something ?

28. But consider to what we have now arrived—to the unity of the internal and external, to the unity of spirit and matter, to the unity of man and nature. What is realized

spirit but the reduction, in the first place, of Nature into Spirit? If, however, Nature were essentially foreign to Spirit, Spirit might indeed be conceived as able to conquer Nature as something foreign to it and apart, but Spirit could not grow and realize itself by means of Nature. Nature, therefore, is spiritual and spirit. The coarsest-looking portion of nature, what seems absolutely dead, is, however, when closely examined, fine beyond conception, and alive, if not as a separate-looking organic entity, yet in universal law; and law is spiritual or spirit. Take a grain of sand: though in itself not alive, as a plant is alive, as an animal is alive, it, in every smallest conceivable and inconceivable portion of it, is alive in universal law, an indissoluble part of the universe, and it is coming to be what it is not, and therefore passing away from being what it is, not merely every moment, for a moment is only the smallest named portion of time, and not in every millionth part of every moment merely, but *always*. We have now thought that grain of sand, and necessarily with it every other thing, *into thought*. All Nature is, therefore, Spirit or spiritual.

29. Throughout all nature, from the wonders of crystallization up to the highest animal below man, you have upon each thing the direct and

visible impress of Spirit. No human skill, with the most exquisitely-fine of possible instruments, could rival the work of Spirit in nature in its meanest effort, namely, the formation of crystals. Then from the lowest vegetation up to the grandest trees, up to the loveliest flowers, Spirit in nature has transcended that first meanest effort, which only attained to an image of life, and has now attained to life itself, but life yet of the lowest grade. Then from the lowest of the animals up to the "half-reasoning" elephant, Spirit in nature all but attains self-realization and freedom. The elephant, however, after all, is all but man, as Ballantyne was all but the author of the Waverley novels! For here all but is really anything but. As the crystal was a mockery of life, instinct is a mockery of reason. From crystallization, then, the work of Spirit in the dust, up to instinct, all but free, the work of Spirit in organised flesh and blood, Spirit has as it were been endeavouring to realize itself, and, though succeeding better and better, has hitherto failed. One other effort: imperial MAN appears. Victory!

30. But consider the air, without which plants and animals could not exist, so that they are one with it; consider heat and light, derived from the sun, without which neither plant nor

animal could live; nay, that heat and light are the very means through which all things are formed. The heat that is in sap and blood was once in the sun; and not merely the light of day, but the light of your fire, long imprisoned in coal, wood, or peat, and now again let loose, was once there.

31. Without man, without self-conscious spirit, without a being possessed of thought and love, all those things, as we saw, and the whole boundless universe besides, would be absolutely destitute of the slightest value. But man, lordly man, appears, owning himself, and therefore capable of owning them, and their worth, in relation to their king "crowned with glory and honour," is at once evident. "Thou madest him," says the Hebrew poet, "to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." But the Hebrew poet, looking at the matter externally and instinctively, failed to see, doubtless, that while, in the political world, subjects and a kingdom are necessary for a king, they, in the world of spirit, *are* the king, and that in the strictest scientific sense. Without them, the spiritual king not only is not a king, but is not at all.

32. The oak *is* not, so long as it remains in the acorn, except ideally, and, in like manner, Spirit *is* only ideally in a new-born child. Both are realized—the tree by striking its roots into the earth and assimilating whatever suits its limited nature; Spirit by *discerning* or dividing all things, and then combining them under categories according to the characteristics discovered in the process of dividing, and thus assimilating, not whatever suits its nature, as if it were only a limited particular like a tree, but everything, as it is universal, and a match for the whole contents of nature. The root of the tree, meeting with what is contrary to it, passes it, or tries to pass it; Spirit, on the other hand, faces all difficulties, and finds a special charm in whatever it has not yet been able to reduce to thought, while charm gradually disappears with possession. Now, as we have already said, if you think away, or *abthink*, backwards, year by year, the increase of a human spirit, its contents, the fruit of its victories over nature, you will arrive at the new-born baby, a mere ideal or potential spirit; just as by a similar process in regard to the tree you will arrive at the acorn. And as with the individual, so with the race.

33. The instrument by which Spirit realizes itself, as a tree by its roots, is its power of

category, which depends on the faculty of language for even its smallest exercise. Language and categorizing are indeed mutually dependent, and develop together, by action and reaction. They are perhaps as truly one as two, like soul and body. At anyrate, without language, or some equivalent, categories could not take form and be held fast by the mind. Now, what is language and its necessary development?

34. Language is no accident, but is indeed the chief feat of spirit, and that by which every other feat in self-development is possible. The boundless contents of Space and Time can only be made its own by an unlimited word-making power. These contents may be called Things and the Altering of Things. We define language, then, as the naming of Things and of the Altering of Things. It consists, therefore, strictly speaking, simply of Nouns and Verbs. The other parts of speech are dependent on these. Pronouns and Adjectives are substitutes for and qualifications of Nouns, and Articles are only a sort of Adjectives. Adverbs are qualifications of Verbs. Prepositions mark the relations of Nouns and Verbs. Conjunctions are simply a convenient invention for the formation of sentences. As for Interjections, their name implies their character—they are words thrown

in among the rest, and named merely in order that no vocal expression of mind (or rather feeling) may be without its category ; and, though of little importance, they, like Prepositions, which are of the greatest importance, bear an equal relation to Nouns and Verbs. Such is the nature of the different parts of speech.

35. We have said that Nature, in relation to Spirit, serves two purposes : *first*, supplies food and raiment, &c., for the body, since man must live before living well ; *second*, furnishes the means of his mental development. The first is there for the second, which, second in the order of time, is of course first in rank. And it must have been with the race as it is with the individual : a supply of food, drink, raiment, shelter, &c., demanded all its first energies. The things and the altering of things most necessary to know in the pursuit of these would be first named. One can easily see how they would, so to speak, *demand* to be named, and would trouble the imagination of the most vigorous spirits, if we may give that title to men at such an almost brutal stage of existence, till they were named. Once named they troubled the imagination no more. They would be named from their chief characteristics in relation to their use for bodily necessities ; and many a great potential poet would doubtless go

down to the dust, in the course of the first ages, bequeathing only a few names of things unnamed before, and perhaps remembered after death for a few months for their curious aptitude for observing and naming; and, though potential poets, not so much a little lower than the angels as a little higher than the brutes. This faculty for naming, and perhaps intenser feelings of love and joy and grief, with a keener sense of beauty and of awe, &c., might be all that distinguished them; and yet what does it matter for that? Their lives were not lost; and, if you look well into it, you will find that they have their good share in the works of Homer, Dante, and Shakspeare. For the development of Spirit in the race is, though manifold, *one*.

36. The first most pressing wants having been satisfied, others would arise, and ever others, requiring the naming of other objects; for it is the nature of Spirit not to rest, but always to go on transcending its past, never counting itself to have attained. But when the clamorous wants of the body were satisfied, the special wants of the Spirit as such would begin to announce themselves, at first weakly, unconsciously, at last consciously, and ever more consciously; and these wants, with their objects, required naming also. Now, the means

of naming these were at hand, namely, the language invented to express bodily wants and their objects ; for, as Spirit is that within which Nature is without, it follows that a metaphorical use of words which express natural objects express spiritual things also. Now began the special work of the poets, such as it remains at this day, and must ever remain—the work of uttering what men in general, or oftener perhaps what the better spirits, long to utter, but cannot. A spiritual vague feeling and longing possessed the hearts of men ; it was uttered in what was felt for the time to be an adequate manner ; this gave a sense of freedom, and consequent joy ; the language in which the feeling was uttered was delighted in, treasured, repeated, and repeated ; and even by means of this repeated utterance (putting out what was within) or expression (pressing out), the feeling as it was at that raw stage was eventually got rid of. But not lost ; for at the same time it was a feeling realized, and marked an important step in the progress of humanity. It was the first step into the infinite internality of Spirit. And as, when the first step into the infinite externality of Nature was accomplished, it prepared the way for another, and these for other steps, and ever others, with increase of strength and skill, on and on to the highest reaches of science

yet attained, and on and on towards all attainable and unattainable reaches; so it was with Spirit also—the first step was but the beginning of an endless march, and the poet is a supply for a demand that can never cease.

37. We began by looking at our hands; and we concluded, from them alone, that there is Somewhat engaged in exercising something that we cannot name, but which is not design, being unspeakably higher in kind. What can we now think of this something when we consider our hands as a part of the living unity of infinite Spirit and infinite Nature? But your cart and your plough showed *design* !

38. We proceed with our argument. We said that from crystals, the mockery of life in the dust, up to the highest of the animals below man, Spirit seemed to have been making a series of abortive attempts to realize itself; but when we look at that series from the point which we have now reached, what a different aspect does it present! The work of Spirit is self-realization by self-knowledge, which must proceed by ever new successful efforts at naming. Think, then, not of the use, so much as of the necessity, of those apparently abortive attempts, for that work. This brings us to consider how it is that Spirit and Nature are one.

39. In the progress of its self-realization,

Spirit attains to the categories under which it ranks *all* things belonging to Nature, and *all* things belonging in the more intimate sense to itself, namely, Space and Time. Now, Spirit and Nature are two and yet one, like the head and the tail of a coin. The head and the tail of a coin are two, and yet one in a third, which is neither and both—the *between* having no existence, except in the other two, which it embraces. But the *between* is a vague term and no name, like head and tail, and very properly ; it is really unnameable, having no characteristic separate existence. It is, however, absolutely necessary for the existence of head and tail, and is really first and last, for without it they are nothing. And if Spirit and Nature are two and yet one, they also must be one in a Third, which is neither because it is both, and unnameable from special characteristic, like the third in the coin, and yet being, like it, the First and the Last. In the coin we *see* the third with our eyes, stretching from utmost extreme to utmost extreme ; and, after a little consideration, we shall likewise see, with perfect clearness, with our mental eyes, the unnameable Third, in which Spirit and Nature are, and are one, for the Three are One. We found that under Space and Time are categorically arranged all existences—all that is in Nature and all that is in

Spirit. But what are Space and Time ? They are mental things merely, that is to say, abstractions, and have no real existence. We say, the Horse is a noble animal, meaning all horses ; but the Horse, just because it means all horses, is not one itself. In like manner, Space is a general abstract term, and arose thus. Things were observed to differ in length, width, and depth. Lengths, widths, and depths belonging to objects required a name—they were called spaces ; and Space is the general abstract term for all spaces. But these particular spaces themselves have no real existence, like horses ; they are nothing but an invention of the understanding to enable it to deal with apparent limits which nowhere really exist. All that really exists is the one unlimited thing, Nature. Nature is absolutely One, but apparently Many ; as your body is one, and your members many ; as the tree is one, but with sap, roots, trunk, branches, boughs, twigs, leaves, blossoms, fruit ; as the fruit is one, and yet many—rind, pulp, core, seed ; as the seed is one, and yet many, containing in it potentially a whole undeveloped tree ; and as other things, and also parts of things, are one and many—with this difference, that neither your body, nor the tree, nor anything else, is absolutely one, but is one of the Many belonging to Nature, the absolutely One.

But the apparent Many of the One Nature are in perpetual change—and it is change alone that gives to Spirit the notion of Time ; nay, it is change of the many of Nature that produces men, that is, individual spirits. Activity produces its like, and Spirit is activity. But equally with Space, Time is an abstract invention of the understanding for the purpose of categorizing all particular times, which, like particular spaces, have no real existence. What exists is Nature, and Nature is in perpetual change. Things do not exist, they only appear to exist, for, before you can think they are, they are not ; and though smoke and vapour visibly change, they change no more in reality than do stone and metal. All particular changes are due to universal change—which is the one law, and law is reason, and reason belongs to Spirit. There is therefore no such thing as Time, which is simply a useful abstraction and invention of the reflective understanding ; for there can be no duration where nothing endures. Space, then, and Time, which is a notion due to what is phenomenal, are not. As regards Time, this will be farther apparent, if needed, by considering that it is measured by regularity of change ; but regular change is no more change than is irregular change. Had there been no regular change, and consequent measurement of

Time by minutes, hours, days, years, &c., there could only have been a consciousness of *state*, and of change of feeling in relation to event. In exact proportion to the intensity with which anything is desired or held in aversion, it seems to come slow or swift. Farther, consider the fantastic (though useful) divisions of Time—past, present, future: the past *is not*, the future *is not*; what IS is an everchanging Present. This forever IS, and is the true eternity, and it is even here, in this world, when it is well considered. Time and Space considered as really existing would be infinitely divisible; but to think of dividing them infinitely is to think them away into pure thought, therefore they do not really exist. Then consider the absurdity of unbeginning Time or Duration. It is impossible to think a beginning to Time, though you may conceive it as never-ending. What is conceived as being an unbeginning thing has of course never begun.

40. All that exists, as we saw, are Nature and Spirit, which are one in an unnameable Third, which is neither and both; so that the Third is all in all. We have opposed Spirit to Nature, and as Nature is a category for embracing all particular things, so Spirit is a category for embracing all individual spirits. But we found Nature to be absolutely one, with

only an apparent many. With reference, then, to one and many, how stands it with Spirit ? Is Spirit one ?

41. We have only to do at present with Spirit as it is known to us, so to speak, in Nature, or as it seems to rise in Nature. At the very first glance at the business, there seems an irreconcilable difference between them, and, on a little further examination, the breach seems to be boundless ; but, as we may mend the proverb, All good things come round to those who work and wait. Possession in Nature is exclusive ; but not so in Spirit. Scotland being divided, whoever owns a house, or a field, does, by that ownership, exclude all others from possessing it ; and this applies to every material object whatsoever. Not so with Spirit. Spirit is insusceptible of division. The doctrine is good also in regard to the fruits of Nature and of Spirit. Whoever possesses the revenue of a house or a field excludes, because that revenue is material ; but the possession of knowledge, love, and spiritual wealth and goods of every name and kind, excludes no one ; but, on the contrary, the possession has a tendency to communicate itself, and it does communicate itself, and that without division or reduction ; nay, the exercise in giving here tends to addition and multiplication. But Spirit rises in a body, and

the body belongs to Nature, and its possession excludes. That which is insusceptible of division, Spirit, which owns itself inalienably, and but for which all Nature as such would be worthless, appears in what is divisible and alienable, and can be taken possession of by others. At executions, receipts are given and taken for the criminal's body; but no one can give a valid receipt for another's spirit. This illimitable, and most powerful of all things, Spirit, appears in a weak and small body, and this only serves to shew its greatness the more. It is as if it had said: "Just let me exist. *There* stands a ground for my existence, in what you call Nature. The smaller case, perhaps the better; it will help to shew what I am, and what I can do with little means, and my triumphs then cannot be attributed to anything except my own inherent energy."

42. Spirit, then, like Nature, is, though an apparent many, one, because indivisible, as we found Nature indivisible, though an apparent many. But, as we cannot say all things at once, we seem to have arrived at a strange and furious contradiction with regard to Nature. We said that Nature is indivisible, because it is one, and that divisions are only apparent; and again that it is divisible, whereas Spirit is not. But there is no real contradiction. Spirit

has an apparent many, as well as Nature ; and our question had reference only to possession. Spirit is its own inalienably ; but, owning itself, it can also possess what is or seems not itself. What it owns, however, of this latter, it does not own absolutely, but as commodity and with reference to its body, which itself, strictly speaking, is commodity. It can therefore alienate all possessions of this kind. But possessions of this kind are only real in reference to commodity ; no house, or field, or material thing, absolutely belongs to any man, or can so belong. It is only *called* his own by compact and agreement with another ; an agreement, too, only *allowed* by arbitrary law of the state ; and house and field, and body-clothes and body, and one's natural life, belong as commodity to the state, when the state shall need and demand them. But the man's spirit and spiritual possessions are absolutely and inalienably his own. The field, &c., cannot be absolutely possessed, for they are in a continual state of change, and are not the same for two seconds. The changing belongs to the changing, as far as it can belong, that is to say, *apparently*, and the unchanging to the unchanging, as far as it can belong, that is to say, *absolutely and eternally*. Therefore nothing in Nature can be absolutely possessed except by Spirit as spirit ; and all Nature abso-

lutely belongs to Spirit as spirit ; for Spirit and Nature are one, and therefore Nature is Spirit.

43. We have shewn that Nature is one, as against the supposition that it is many ; that Spirit is one, as against the like supposition ; and that Spirit and Nature are not two, but One. But can that which is neither two, nor more than two, and which is infinite, be *one* ? No ; for onè is one as being limited, and therefore one of two or more ; for what is limited is limited by another. This one is unnameable in every way, and is only *called one*, as possessing what is a not-two-or-moreness ; for, being infinite, it is not one. This so-called One is the Third already referred to as the Unnameable, the All in all, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. And what is this One but that Something which we were in search of as exercising something inconceivably greater than design ? And what is that but God !

44. We have found God by intellectual search ; and by moral search, too, we may find him ; but, in both senses, he is to be found, as must now be evident, only by his own revealing of himself to us, since he is All in all. It is only with thought derived from him that we can know him ; it is only with love derived from him that we can love him. To shew how these revelations of him, which include all

possible revelations of whatever sort, do and must take place, is the chief purpose of this discourse.

45. But before going forward to accomplish our design, we must remove certain misapprehensions of God which may obtain in the reader's mind. The reader may be one of those very numerous persons who have contented themselves with vague notions, where mere words occupy the places of thoughts and things, in relations to the highest matters, either because they have never attempted to transcend the teachings of childhood, which are necessarily erroneous in form, or because they lacked ability, without assistance, to transcend them. It may be that, if the intellect in childhood were left unoccupied by notions of God which childhood is utterly unable to realize, the chief of all things, the education and culture of the heart, would suffer, and that in many if not in most cases irrevocable damage would result. Children are therefore properly taught, that there is a God living away up there in Heaven, who, at the same time, is present everywhere, and that he hears and sees everything, and that he made everything, and that he loves and rewards the good, and is angry with and punishes the wicked. Even in early childhood, however, the clearer heads are not quite satis-

fied with this. The incipient philosophers will sometimes ask such questions as these: "Is God large?" "Had he a father and mother?" "Who made him?" "Is he very old?" "What did he make things out of?" "Did it require much nothing?" "Did it take all the nothing that there was?" "Are there different kinds of nothing?" "Did he make angels and grass out of the same kind of nothing?" "Does he sit in heaven?" "What does he sit on?" "Does he walk about?" "What does he walk on?" "Did he always and always stand before he made anything?" "If it had been you, wouldn't you have made a sofa? But, O me! *before* you made the sofa, you would have had to stand forever and forever and forever, wouldn't you?" They often ask such questions, going into metaphysics up to the chin, and over head and ears, and often receive very unsatisfactory replies. A brother, a little older, and willing to shew that wisdom comes with age, may reply: "Goosie! Don't you know that God is a spirit?"—when a dialogue such as the following results:

INCIPIENT PHILOSOPHER.—But what is a spirit?

ORTHODOX ELDER BROTHER.—I don't know. Just a spirit.

I. P.—But isn't a spirit something and not nothing?

O. E. B.—Of course! But we mustn't be wise above what is written; and the Bible doesn't say what a spirit is. It just says that God is a spirit; that's all.

I. P.—I would give everything that I have, all my marbles, and both my white rabbits, to know what a spirit is. Wouldn't you?

O. E. B.—No I wouldn't. What's the use? You could get a shilling for your rabbits.

I. P.—What's the use! When we've got enough to eat and drink, isn't all the rest just to know, and to know, and to know, always more, and more, and more?

O. E. B.—No, no, Goosie! When we've enough to eat and drink, we need more to make us comfortable; and we should get and lay by money to make us comfortable all our lives; and we should believe what is right, in order to be comfortable to all eternity in Heaven. We should try to know arithmetic, and geography, and *useful* things.

I. P.—I feel that you are wrong; and I hope to know yet what God and spirit is. But I wish to know arithmetic and geography too.

46. Now, our little keen inquirer, so anxious to know, is an incipient philosopher, and an Israelite indeed, and his orthodox brother, so willing to cover his ignorance by words, and so anxious to possess property, is a Philistine

pretty well developed. It is easy to see that the paths in life of these two will widely diverge; and that, whatever they do, the one will hold fast the form of what are considered sound words by the church into which he happened to be born, and the other will have an inward necessity of understanding whatever words he uses before admitting them to be reasonable. He will not have the vulgar and cowardly presumption of deciding on doctrine without examination; he will have the humility and honesty to make an exhaustive inquest, and the honesty and courage to proclaim the result. Nor will he rest satisfied till he knows the truth for himself. No hearsay whatever, however respectable it may appear by its reputed source or antiquity, will have authority for him: truth is not a thing for the ear and tongue, but for the intellect and heart. It is not a thing to be spoken and written in air and ink, but to be lived spiritually.

47. A deistical Abstraction, a general notion of a God, to which, for the nonce, one gives ears and eyes, and other things which we know it does not possess, can never satisfy man. And luckily it requires but very little energy of mind to dismiss for ever from one's thoughts this miserable, though for a time perhaps necessary, idol of the childish imagination. But yet,

what multitudes, including many divines, are for ever unable to get effectually rid of it in after-life! To this idol is absurdly attributed almighty power, and he is said to be the creator of Nature, which he made out of nothing. Well, if, when this God is supposed to have existed alone, he made Nature out of nothing, Nature is at bottom nothing still, even if he made it out of the very best, closest, hardest nothing that he could find in himself; for, filling all, and being all, there could be no nothing out of him, at any rate none worth mention, for it would have been difficult to scrape together two and a half pounds avoirdupois of it, if indeed so much, and the most orthodox divine cannot suppose, if he will speak what he thinks, that an ounce less would have sufficed. We will not stay to enquire whether the nothing used was spiritual nothing or material nothing, or whether there existed two varieties; nor might we be successful in our inquiries, since even theology itself is silent on that important point. Theologians have differed as to the mode in which the portion of nothing which was honoured by the divine selection was made sufficiently aware of the divine intentions, and of the high distinction conferred upon it. Some have thought that a mere internal exercise of the divine *will* was adequate to rouse nothing

from its nothingness ; others again think a *word* was used, forgetting that this implies, to say no more, an ear in nothing, and creates another little difficulty ; and others think that the *nod* of a good Abstraction, to which they have made a present of almightiness, was abundantly sufficient, in the circumstances, to put nothing on the alert, forgetting that this implies at the least an eye in nothing, or perhaps thinking that an eye or so is not much ; and right enough, too, for much more is not much in theology. Theologians are not now, where once they were, in the saddle, riding our souls ; and if any reader, after what has been said, is in the slightest doubt as to the creation of the world out of nothing, let him consider the terrible force of ingrained habit, and that all the nothing that was had lain undisturbed for a whole eternity in perfect ease and idleness, and how sullenly reluctant it would have been to be fingered for anything, much more for the purpose of having an eye or an ear fixed in its head—not to speak of having to spring up, on the shortest notice, and be stretched out to bursting on all sides : let the reader consider this, and he will think the creation out of nothing the work only of theologians, who are certainly able to create out of it, since, indis-

putably, they have often created out of it at least many great difficulties.

48. Theologians give to their Abstraction a whole eternity of idleness, and, after six days labour (the labour of saying a few words each day), another long rest. But they have forgotten that, if there had been a time when the universe did not exist, it never could have existed, even if nothing, in terror of damnation for disobedience, had not proved refractory, or, weary of its beinglessness, had been willing to be, if it could only see how to take the first step, for nothing is no great genius. The truth is, they do not think what they are saying, and content themselves with words, words, words. Their God was idle, or he was not idle, before the supposed creation. But what could give a more blasphemous, because ridiculous and degrading, conception of God, than a conception of him as eternally idle, not even thinking?—and if not perfectly idle, he must have been thinking; but what could he think, what difficulty had he to overcome by inward debate, since difficulty presupposes finiteness? and even if difficulty had been possible, there would always have been a whole past eternity during which any difficulty must have been overcome by the struggle of the divine thought. Then, as an eternity would always have been past,

the period would always have arrived for creation. One feels almost ashamed of exposing such folly, preached by confused men to a simple credulous race, patient of authority, in the name of religion; a work which was, however, unhappily necessary, for, though the work has already been done, it needs to be done again and again. Again and again, so long at least as black doctrines of God are taught; so long as descriptions of God are given which, instead of being attractive to the pious young soul, are crushing and horrifying to it, and which, even after his tough theological training, make the Rev. Dr. Cunningham of Crieff shudder even to read.* “By the decree of God,” says the *Confession of Faith*, in a sweet chapter, a chapter breathing of sweet reasonableness, a chapter full of sweetness and light, the sweet and edifying Third Chapter—“By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.” *L'étrange Dieu que voilà!* “For the manifestation of his

* *The Scotsman*, Sept. 24, 1884.

glory." *L'étrange Dieu que voilà, encore une fois!* This sweet and edifying chapter states that this doctrine affords "matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God". Theologians are wonderful creatures; and it is surprising that they did not find it to afford matter so love-inspiring that the steady contemplation of it was enough to ensure the fulfilment of the first and great commandment. But since *Holy Willie's Prayer*, this Demon-God has been slowly dying, though many Doctors have done what they could for him, and though Dr. Rainy, but with an insufficient number of assistants, is still doing his best. Once in the popular imagination, it takes long for a God to die; but the arrows are in him, he is smitten; I see his death in vision: he begins to roll in his throne like a creature full of fiery anguish; lo, his crown is off, the tyrant of ages; see, he rises in mortal agony, but he rises to fall, never to rise;—but who are these by the throne? they seize, they lift, they hurl him headlong; and look where down the steep at last he tumbles—and man is free!

49. We have arrived at the true God, who is the One and All, in whom both Spirit and Nature are one; but we found that he is only called one as against the notion of his being more than one, and that infinity cannot

really be numerically one. In like manner, infinity is without allness. It is most important—it is indispensable—to have a right conception of this, that God is absolutely infinite, and that, therefore, he is neither one nor more than one; that What Is possesses endlessness, and has therefore no allness. Besides the words *one* and *all*, the word *system* is misleading. People speak of the system of the universe. But a system is a *oneness* with co-ordination and relativity of parts; and the universe, being endless, cannot possess system.

50. There is nothing but God, as we have found; but we would fain, if possible, know God; and we cannot know him simply by knowing what he is *not*. The knowing what he is not is only, as it were, a clearing of the ground for establishing what he is; or it is useful for removing misapprehension.

51. All that is known to man is Nature and Spirit; but Nature is unconscious, or, in the animals, instinctively-conscious, Spirit; and, as like is known only to like, it is thus only that self-conscious Spirit can know Nature. What we know of being done in the Universe of any value is the production of spirits. If there were only One Human Spirit in the universe, and no other spirit, we saw that infinite Nature would sink into insignificance in his presence, or be

significant only in as far as it was of service to him. But there is this also in human spirits, as we saw, that they are capable of thinking *perfectly*, or, which in this case is the same thing, *infinitely*, and they are, therefore, infinite in their very *nature*, infinite and eternal in their very *kind*, and they may, therefore, be well called children of God. In relation to the Time-World, spirits rise and vanish, but that which were other in kind than those spirits could not produce them; God therefore is Spirit, and may properly be named the Infinite Source of Spirits, or, better, the Infinite Father of Spirits. As we cannot know Nature out of ourselves, nor another Spirit out of ourselves, so we cannot know God out of ourselves, or as other than Spirit and the Father of Spirits. But to know God as Spirit and the Father of Spirits is for spirits to know God. And though "children," "Source," and "Father," are metaphors, we have already seen that it is by metaphor that spiritual things are named—"Spirit" itself indeed being a metaphor, originally meaning *breath*. But we say *Infinite* Father: God is therefore both known and unknown.

52. But finite spirits, finite in attained degree, though possessing an unlimitedness as kind, are personal. Is God also personal, self-conscious?

Does he know himself and what he is about ?
Does he know all things ?

53. You have arrived at what seems the abyss of abysses, which, however, you must try to fathom ; for you are Spirit, and Spirit is, as was long since truly said, that which is capable ; which agrees also with Paul, "The spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God". We saw that there was what ineffably transcended design, and that this belonged to God. God therefore possesses what ineffably transcends knowledge, and what ineffably transcends love. But *What Is* is God ; and God is the infinite possession of himself. It is simply to degrade the idea of God to say that he, considered in himself as an object of contemplation to finite spirits, *designs* this and that, *knows* this and that, *loves* this and that. Realize the idea of God's knowledge by an example. Does God know all the spiders in the universe ; how many there are of them, the exact age and size and weight of each ; their different degrees of relationship, and what degree of relationship each bears to every other spider that ever has been, is, or will be ; how many webs each has made, and when, and where, and of how many meshes each consisted ; all the flies that each spider has devoured ; the exact age, and size, and weight of each fly ; how many and what gyrations each

fly made in the air, and when, and where, and on what noses each alighted, in short, the biography of each fly from its birth till devoured by a spider; how often, and where, and how long each fly buzzed; the different degrees of relationship among the flies devoured, and what degree of relationship each bore to every other fly that ever has been, is, or will be; and all other particulars of possible information regarding every spider in the universe and its food? We have chosen the spider as being a very respectable insect compared with many; and we leave it to the reader to think of all the other insects that ever have been, are, or will be throughout the universe, and of all their genealogies, and of the biography and history of every insect and its race, where they crawled, flew, or swam, when, and for what; what eggs they laid, when, and where; from the histories of the wars of the red and white ants down to the biographies of animalculæ and infusoria. But this after all is only a popular and representative way of reasoning. Remember that God, considered as the Universal Spirit and Infinite Father of Spirits, simply *is*: he is not growing old; he has not been; he will not be. He is the I AM. Insects are coming to be and passing away. He is not the God of flies; they are subjects of death; and, as Jesus said,

"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living".

54. God, then, considered as the Infinite, is not personal, and neither thinks nor loves ; but God is what is, and, therefore, he is personal, inasmuch as he thinks and loves in man, that is to say, in all finite spirits ; and we have seen that, though finite, they possess a ground of infinity, and are therefore capable of knowing and loving God.

55. But God is not personal, and that just *because he is more than personal*. Personality is self-conscious ; but personality is self-conscious because it is conscious of what is not itself, that is, it is conscious only because it is finite. But God is infinite ; therefore God is not self-conscious. He does not think and know, and that just *because he more than thinks and knows* ; he does not love, and that just *because he more than loves*. It is of the utmost importance to understand this ; and that God is UNNAMEABLE in exact scientific language ; for to use negatives is not adequately to name.

56. There are two kinds of human language, and only two ; scientific language and poetic language. There is the ordinary popular language, but, on examination, it is found to be poetic language, which by much use has become abstract and dull, having lost its original colour

and concreteness. Scientific language aims at a perfectly adequate expression of its object ; it is the language of cold intelligence and "dry light" : poetic language aims at an approximate expression of what is insusceptible of adequacy, namely, feeling and passion ; it is the language of moist light. Now, our inquiry is in regard to all revelation ; and we found the importance and necessity of language in man's self-realization—that is, in the revealing of himself to himself, which is the only possible revelation of God. For we found that man's world is a world within, whether in regard to so-called Nature or to Spirit. Individuals grow in spirit, and learn to transmit, by language, to their families, and tribes, and nations, their spiritual acquisitions ; the after-comers do the same, and so age after age starts advantageously in comparison with the foregoing, because with much of the experience of the foregoing ; and so the revelation of God to man, or man's self-realization, proceeds forever. In the course of time, writing is invented, and the more powerful minds commit to writing for the benefit of posterity their noblest thoughts and inspirations. Some of these are so splendid that they are hailed as divine, and so the world has its Bibles. One of these surpasses all the rest, the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament, and is held by

the most advanced nations at the present day to be the revealed Word of God.

57. Now, all that exists is nothing but God, and a revelation of God. We have exploded the foolish mechanical notion of design in regard to God, and in so doing we virtually exploded also the notion of a mechanical revelation. There is no adaptation of means to ends in Nature or Spirit; there is no mechanical joining or nailing anywhere: there is one (what we may *call* one) life, in infinite variety: there is, in the luminous words of the Metaphysician and Poet, James Hutchison Stirling, THAT WHICH COULD NOT BUT BE.

58. From the truths which we have already discovered, it follows that there *must* be a revelation of God in writing; for writing is a form of language, and language is the means by which man categorizes and thinks, the means by which he realizes himself; and every good book will be in its degree such a revelation. Now, if there is any book in existence, which man has been enabled to write in the course of his development, which clearly reveals the way to the highest height, which reveals how we may become actually and consciously, what from the first unconsciously and ideally we are, "partakers of the Divine Nature," that book can never be superseded, and is entitled, by its final

excellence of superiority, to be called, what it really is, the Word of God. But, more than that, it follows necessarily from the truths we have discovered, that, if such a book does not now exist, it must exist in the course of man's development. The question, then, is, *Does* such a book exist? We answer, without hesitation or a trace of doubt, It does, and it is the Christian Bible.

59. There lies before me at this moment on the table a copy of the Bible. Is *that* the Word of God? It is neither the word of God nor of man. It is only a little mass of matter, composed of paper, and ink, and paste, and paste-board, and thread, and leather. It contains not a single thought nor feeling. What a violent metaphor, then, to call *that* the word of God (which term indeed were a metaphor in any case)!

60. "Ah," you will exclaim, "but look at the signs of thought and feeling in ink." True; but they are merely *signs*. The writers, all of them, took all their thoughts and feelings away with them; they could not part with them; and it is to speak metaphorically and poetically to say that anyone *communicates* his feeling or thought, by word, oral or written, or by any other sign. No thought or feeling ever was or can be imparted, strictly and scientifically

speaking. Do not think this distinction fantastic; you will find it immediately to be of vast importance! so important that a full consideration of it will throw a light into and upon your nature such as you have never seen before and higher than which you can never see again. The thought of Isaiah remained Isaiah's; the thought of Paul remained his. No virtue of thought went out of them by speaking or writing; on the contrary, their thought rather became for the first time fully their own by giving it a form in writing or in speech. If I truly read their writings, the thoughts that arise in my mind are mine, though they are *exactly* the same as the thoughts that were in their minds. We have already seen in a former section that spiritual possessions cannot be divided.

61. Reading is reproduction, and reproduction were impossible unless mind were one. It is God in every spirit that enables each of us to have thoughts which are also another's, and without lessening in the slightest his possession. But by what means do we reproduce the thoughts of another, whatever may be the sign used by him? By categorization, and by that alone. You can only read, you can only think, to the extent to which you have mastered categories. If you have a vague notion of a

category, you think vaguely under it ; if you have a clearer notion of it, you think more clearly ; if a perfect notion, you can think perfectly.

62. If the Bible writers, then, were inspired by God, they necessarily took their inspiration, that is to say, their thoughts and feelings, away with them, and left only dead signs of those living feelings and thoughts ; and whoever, by means of category, partially or perfectly mastered, reproduces partially or perfectly those thoughts and feelings, is inspired by God to the extent of that reproduction, as truly as the Bible writers were. As it is written, "The inspiration of the Almighty giveth man understanding". Whoever understands is inspired by God to the extent to which he understands. And remember that your thought is equally your own whether it took origin first in your own mind or another's : it cannot be *given* to you ; it can only *rise* in you in accordance with its own nature.

63. To a child who has yet not been taught the four quarters, East, West, North, and South, nor what a village is, you say nothing by saying that such and such a village is in the North or elsewhere : these categories must first be known to the child, and then the child understands. It is the same with everything else, without

exception. A child of five may pronounce correctly the following words, a verse of Menander quoted by Paul : " Evil communications corrupt good manners " ; but no child of five ever understood them, for these five words involve five great categories, of which none can be mastered by a child of five. And, in passing, it may be remarked that the Christian apostle, in borrowing that verse from the Heathen poet, shewed what *his* view of inspiration was : if it had not been inspired in the comedy where first it was written, the mechanical transference of it to the sacred page would certainly not give it that characteristic.

64. It follows that the Bible is not quite the same book to the same man for two years together ; and that it differs immensely to men in widely different stages of culture ; as practically we see. For, by the exercise of category in different degrees, men in using the Bible unlock the springs of thought and feeling, not in the Bible, which is dead ink and paper, but in themselves, who are living spirits.

65. The Bible is a volume containing some of the most amusing and instructive traditionary tales of times before the period of history ever written, histories, an epic, a pastoral song, with other poems and songs, a collection of proverbs, a moral treatise, biographies, epistles, and a

mystic prose-poem—a great literature extending from before the time of Moses till after the time of Christ; shewing, as no literature shewed before, or perhaps ever can shew again, the development of Spirit, from its first instinctive state to its culmination in conscious union with God. This conscious union took place in the person of Jesus Christ, whose life and teaching renders that conscious union possible to every other man, if he will be true to the divine message.

66. The Bible is, then, anything but one book, except in as far as the bookbinder makes it one; and yet it *is* one again in the very highest sense, in respect of its so wonderfully illustrating that growth of Spirit to which we have referred. But the growth of Spirit is by transcending itself through ever new reaches of self-realization, a growth which even proceeds by contradiction and opposition, without which there can be no energy. To see lower thoughts of God superseded by higher is, then, what we might expect, and not a cut-and-dry revelation once for all. And what we might expect we find. Nay, we find what would fill us with horror, as the most hideous blasphemy, if we read it for the first time in manhood, after having thought of God from childhood in the high manner in which the best minds of the nineteenth century

think of him. We shall give a few examples of this. God is represented as sending Moses to Pharaoh, again and again, with orders to let the children of Israel go, under pretence that they were going only for the purpose of performing a religious service to the Lord their God, and with the intention, of course, of returning after performing it; he is represented as sending Moses with threats of grievous plagues for disobedience, and which he actually brings upon the king in consequence of his disobedience, while all the time he hardens his heart in order that he should disobey, to give him an opportunity of producing those plagues: "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt". Putting aside the pretence, surely very unworthy, according to our notions of to-day, even if he had not been able to send a spirit of deep sleep on Pharaoh and all the Egyptians for forty-eight hours or so, which would have done the business most effectually, let us ask, What would we think of a man who, not being a lunatic, should call his horse to the right, pull him to the left, and then, at his own sweet will, whip him violently for not going to the right? Instead of saying, "Has not the potter power over the clay?" we would give intimation to the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and the

just plague to the man would be, by Christian law, imprisonment, with bread of affliction, and with water of affliction, for a certain number of days, and, if he were a person of any education or property, without the option of a fine. A plague, juster still, though illegal, would be a good horse-whipping. Again, the Lord is represented as saying, in those circumstances, to Moses: "Speak now in the ears of the people and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver and jewels of gold". You see that the conception of God at that stage of the development of Spirit among the children of Israel was very unworthy and very low. But what shall we say of the representation of God by the prophet Micaiah the son of Imlah? He says he saw the Lord on his throne sending down a spirit to tempt Ahab to his ruin by means of lies. "Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? and one said on this manner and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I

will go forth, and I will be a lying Spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also : go forth and do so." What shall we say of this ? or of that command of God to Ezekiel, with which we will not defile our English tongue ? As to the latter, let us say nothing, unless we exclaim with the prophet himself, " Ah, Lord God " ; and as to the former, does it not seem, if Satan were once a spirit of light, and one of the host of heaven, and fell, that he had not very far to fall ? The Prologue in heaven in Goethe's *Faust* is mild in comparison with this matter of Ahab. The Jove of Homer, after threatening, like a modern coal-heaver, but only more elegantly, to beat his wife, sends a lying dream to Agamemnon ; but, though this is gross enough, it is far indeed from being so scandalizing as the story of the Lord sending the lying spirit. Again, God is represented as *laughing* when he sees the day of the wicked coming. Homer represents the immortal gods as laughing inextinguishably at Vulcan bustling about and pouring out nectar, but this laughter was genial and humane, not sarcastic, still less diabolical, as we now would properly hold laughter at the destruction of the wicked to be. The conception of God was sadly low in those days even in the best minds.

67. It is no pleasure to us to make these remarks, for they are apt to be misunderstood by the meaner spirits, who catch at anything that seems to degrade what is high and reverend and holy; and, if there is anything high and reverend and holy in the world, it is the Bible. But the course of our great argument demands them; and it is the common vulgar defenders of the Bible, understanding nothing of the nature of Spirit, or what a true notion of divine revelation implies, who, by "lying for God," and attempting to establish an external harmony in the Bible, not only where no such harmony exists, but where none such is possible, or *ought* to be, are the worst enemies of the Bible and of revelation, and, therefore, of the human soul in its highest interests. There is no such God as those foolish vulgar defenders imagine, and therefore no such revelation as they ignorantly fancy. It was to be expected that there should be furious contradictions, as well as blunders and misstatements, in the Bible, and we find them there in abundance. For the Bible was not dictated by God to its writers, as a man dictates documents to his secretaries; but eternal reason arose within, like a little seed in the coarse gross earth, and struggled forward into the light, and grew for long ages, and stood all trials of

tempest and drought, till it blossomed and became seed again (small like a grain of mustard-seed) in the person of Jesus Christ. It is racy of the soil, and bears the mark of its circumstances in all the course of its development. But if in the seed the tree ideally already is, so it is with this also; and the moral tree, standing at last as complete in the person of Christ, is only the development of what was there from the beginning: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself"; but Christ could come only in the "fulness of time," just as in the fulness of time it is that the perfect blossom and new seed can only come, for what is deepest in is last to come out. The endurance and trials of the tree has no history; but, in the case of Spirit, it is different, and we shall greatly err, if, in the history, we either take for or confound with the transcendent thing itself what was there only for the very purpose of being transcended.

68. Some gross and even abominable representations of God are, as we have seen, contained in the Bible; and the reader should therefore not be surprised at any other error or contradiction, but endeavour to elevate his mind to a true conception of what revelation *must* be

in accordance with the nature of Spirit. Let him remove from his mind the foolish prejudices and superstitions in which he has been educated, and, first, let him examine closely the doctrine of the Fall of Man, which was taught by Paul, and which even appears to a careless reader to be taught in the beginning of the book of Genesis, but which is upon the whole not a Bible doctrine, and certainly not a doctrine of Christ's. Paul was, for his time and country, a thorough-bred reasoner, and he had besides by nature strong philosophical tendencies. Such a man usually endeavours to work his ideas into system. In doing so, he is greatly tempted to press into his service whatever seems to make for him, and the more earnest and practical he is in regard to life, with the less examination; and to this temptation he generally succumbs. And Paul succumbed to this temptation as miserably as any man, inspired or uninspired, could well do. In speaking of the universal corruption of human nature, he tries to confirm the doctrine by this quotation from the Psalms: "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." On referring to the Psalm itself, however, in either

of its two editions, the Fourteenth Psalm or the Fifty-third Psalm (and it is for the mechanical theorists to explain why the Holy Spirit should give *two* editions of this Psalm, and, when they are about it, they may just as well at the same time explain why some Psalms are, like the Lamentations of Jeremiah, written in curious acrostics, and others not, and why he failed to carry out his acrostic plan in verses sixteenth and seventeenth of the Fourth Lamentation), we find that the Psalmist had no such thought as the universal corruption of human nature in his head. He is thinking only of the very general corruption of mankind; and, as poets use, he speaks in the language of exaggeration and passion: "God looked down from heaven," says he, "upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God". He poetically, but unscientifically, represents God as ignorant, and as seeking for information in regard to the subjects of his ignorance; and then his surprise and disappointment at finding men immensely worse than he would have expected: "Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one". God, who, if man were fallen, would know that human nature was corrupted, did not need to look down from heaven to ascertain it. But

the conclusion of the Psalm shews clearly what was the writer's purpose. He continues, putting these words into the mouth of God: "Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? Who eat up my people as they eat bread." The substance of the Psalm, then, is, in plain prose, this: The workers of iniquity are overwhelmingly numerous in comparison with the people of God. Now, in the name of Spirit, before which even the apostle Paul shrinks into insignificance, I think we should look well after the correctness of the doctrine of a man who can make such an alarming blunder as this; and this blunder is even exceeded, if possible, by the continuation of his quotation from another Psalm.

69. That Christ did not believe in the universal corruption of human nature is evident from the parable of the sower. The kingdom of heaven is like a sower going forth to sow seed, and some falls on good ground, which Christ explains to his disciples to mean "a good and honest heart".

70. It remains for us to examine the account of the Fall in Genesis, and to look at the rest of the Bible in relation to this supposed Bible doctrine. In the earliest histories of nations there is a traditionary period, before the beginning of history strictly so called, containing

prodigies and miracles mixed up with accounts of what probably had a real basis of event, and many of those prodigies and miracles, too, may have had for their origin an actual ground of misinterpreted fact. This period may be called the nation's childhood, when inexperience and ignorance are nearly perfect, and simplicity and delight in wonder great, and when belief is capacious enough to receive almost anything with an easy grasp. As childhood shews the man, so the childhood of a nation shews the genius of that nation, a fact which renders its earliest traditionary tales of great importance. The earliest traditions of the Hebrews mark its genius in a wonderful manner. The stories of a lost Paradise (commonly called the Fall), of the Flood, of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, etc., are remarkably significant of the people which of all peoples has had in one word *Righteousness* for its chief aim ; stories giving as it were lisping utterance to the true philosophy, that the Universe, which, to the vulgar eye, is a coarse physical system, where Spirit is a curious accident to be accounted for, and, to the intellectual pedant, an intellectual system, is Moral.

71. The Lord God, in the charming myth of the origin of humanity, is said to have formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed

into his nostrils the breath of life, so that he became a living soul; and, having planted a garden eastward in Eden, he put the man in it to keep it, with permission to eat of every tree in it except one, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, under penalty of death without a day's delay. Then the Lord God brought every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, to Adam, to see what he would call them, and he gave them all names: fish, which are the birds of the water, as birds are the fish of the air, not having the honour of being mentioned, their presence doubtless being excused on the score of extreme inconvenience. All animals had mates but Adam; and the Lord God, seeing that it was not good for him to be alone, caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, and having taken one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof, he made a woman out of the bone, and brought her to Adam, who said (and it is the first good guess on record): "This is now bone of my bone," but he added, with a pardonable mistake, "and flesh of my flesh". And they went about naked without shame. After what has just been said, it ought not to surprise the reader to learn that the serpent talked in those days, and very good Hebrew by what appears, nothing behind Adam and Eve themselves, though whether with a slightly

hissing accent is not recorded, and we should not be wise above what is written. The serpent said to Eve, who had apparently been saying something to him in Adam's absence about the restrictions they were under in regard to the tree of knowledge (and she would naturally enough be glad of his conversation in the circumstances): "Yea, has God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" And upon Eve repeating the divine injunction and threat, the serpent said: "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil". The serpent seems to have known, like De Quincey and others, that women are naturally aristocratical, as well as curious. Eve liked the look of the fruit very much, and took some of it, and gave some of it to her husband; and the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they made themselves aprons. When they heard the Lord God walking in the garden, they hid themselves from his presence. On being questioned, the man blamed the woman, and the woman the serpent. "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat

all the days of thy life : and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception ; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children ; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it : cursed is the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life ; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee ; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field ; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground ; for out of it thou wast taken : for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” And the Lord God made coats of skin, and clothed them. “And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil : and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever : therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man ; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword

which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of Life."

72. Now, though this story is one which, on the very face of it, to any one who has drunk of the true spirit of literature, shews its origin perfectly, there are many men who even yet are capable of believing it, many more who are capable of believing that they believe it, and still more who are incapable of saying that they do not believe it. We intend to help these three classes of persons by a close examination of the story.

73. When we read in the greatest and most earnest authors of ancient and modern times of, for instance, talking trees, and of men being seen carrying their heads in their hands for lanterns, and of Care sitting on a horse behind the horseman, etc., etc., we know where we are; we know that these great men wrote simply in order to tell us THE TRUTH, and that they cared for nothing else, not even for fact. For mere facts are not truths. Or, if you say of them, with the clown in *Measure for Measure*, "here be truths," let such truths be called Truths of the Threepence Fruit-Dish, or Truths of the Lower Chair (*see Act II., Sc. I.*). It is not truth that a Bible lies before me at this moment on the table, though it is a fact; nor would I increase in your mind the number of truths, or

fatten your soul at all, but simply increase the number of your facts, and leave your soul exactly where it was, were I to tell you that it is a paragraph Bible, that it was bought in the year 1860; that it cost a friend of mine four shillings and sixpence, and that it is covered with leather; nay, I only border upon truth, without reaching it, when I tell you that at the Hundred-and-third Psalm there is pasted on the margin by his hand a wild daisy not plucked by him on a certain day, that there are three words in his handwriting saying whose favourite Psalm that was, and that the water has doubtless stood in his eyes when he read: "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more." And even this regarding our frame is not truth, but only fact; but we reach truth immediately if we continue the quotation, where Thought comes to comfort Love giving way to grief: "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them". Here we have both truth and fact. But if you open the

Song of Solomon, you will find Truth laughing at Fact, and it is the very manner of Truth, and her delight and joy, not only without losing her character for a moment, but just then most when her character shines at its brightest in that fairest countenance of hers, to sport with Fact, which she thinks to be often a very dull and stupid soulless creature, and so she often sports with it, and laughs at it, and though she always uses it, she often, bravado-like, or in fun-earnest, as if to shew that she could almost do without it, abuses it also, wherever she can find a true poet for a mouth-piece. In the Song of Solomon, you find it written merrily : “ King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, *the midst thereof being paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem.*”

74. On opening my Bible to make the last quotation, I saw the words : “ The mountains of Bether ” ; and a fancy striking me, I took a slip of paper and wrote a Song, which, as it happens to illustrate what we have just been saying, I shall here insert for the reader’s recreation, before we resume our argument. It was made almost as fast as my pen could write it down, but time has little to do with these things. It is written in the very spirit of the Song of

Solomon, and is, like it, susceptible of a religious meaning, which the reader is welcome, though not advised, to give to it; and if any exceeding grave matter-of-fact man, nearly as stupid as mere sober fact itself, and whose whole life perhaps is but a truth of the Lower Chair, should, in the interests of what he foolishly fancies to be religion, think my Song *too-too*, I shut the door of his face upon his tongue at once, by quoting what he, if a believer in mechanical inspiration, must consider to be the recommendation and advice, if not command, of God himself: "Rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love." And now having, by Divine authority silenced the rash and ignorant censure of pure and simple-hearted innocence, here, friend, is my pretty little Song, like a song of birds "that do among the branches sing with delectation," and which every future bridegroom should have by heart:—

There are Hills that are white, there are Hills that are
 green ;
 Rough and hard are the most, wherever I've been,
 But smooth Hills there are, and here they are seen
 Rising soft from each Side of a Valley between :
 I am drunk with Delight of the Vision.

Perfection that fashioned, with Pride whispers, "Lo,
Where the Might and the Magic of Beauty may go
Here the Heart through the Eyes deep-enraptured may
know!"

And the Valley and Hills are white as with Snow,
But I feel them and find them all aglow,
The Snow is alive and warm, and so
I wonder no more that Pinks should grow—
And a prettier Pair of Pinks I trow
The green Lap of April cannot shew
Than the two on the Top that sweetly blow
In the Snow of the Hills of Division.

Could anything be *truer* than this Song?

75. In the story of a lost Paradise (absurdly called the Fall of Man), the speaking serpent alone ought to shew to what category of stories it belongs, not to mention the Lord God walking about, making a man out of dust, and a woman out of a bone, nor to mention the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, nor the tree of life, nor the curious fact that all four, the Lord God, the serpent, the man, and the woman, speak the same language without having learned it. The Lord God walking about, and making man so, is no longer the Infinite and Eternal, but is a little object in space and time. He plants a garden *eastward*: well, at his back there is an infinite *westward* in a straight line in space, which he never can have explored, and which, had he been exploring it at the rate (in such a relation the wretchedly poor rate) of a million

million myriad myriad leagues a moment, for any number of ages and æons, would still be an infinite westward in a straight line in space unexplored and unexplorable by him; whilst in front of him beyond the garden there is an infinite eastward, and to his left and right an infinite northward and southward equally unexplored and unexplorable. Such a being never could know that he was chief in the universe. Nay, ten hundred thousand millions, or any number, of such beings, possessing and possessed in forms, however vast, stationed at equal distances apart all round a globe, and taking flight together on a voyage of exploration through the universe each in a straight line, flying at the rate of a million million myriad myriad leagues at every waft of wing, could never discover whether there were not a greater such God than this Lord God of the garden; for they would always be only at the beginning of their flight, while each day, too, would increase the growing space between each by inconceivable unexplored distances. There is, therefore, no possible God in the sense represented in the fable of a lost Paradise; as, indeed, we formerly demonstrated. The true God is the object of Pure Thought, and not an object of the Imagination or of the Senses. After saying this, we need not pursue the absurdities of a man and woman,

big babies of one day old, speaking and thinking before they had learned to think and speak, with ready-made characters made a present to them as one gets the present of a gold watch, and with such characters, too, that their moral shoulders are supposed strong enough to have laid upon them the responsibility of a world's woe and welfare. It was, however, but natural that ready-made characters should yield at the very first trial. Character that is worth anything is of a slow growth, as all things are that stand well and long.

76. With regard to the meaning of the story, it is certain that the inventor of it, whoever he was (it is possible that Moses might get it, or one like it, from the Egyptian priests), did not intend to say, that man lost Heaven and won Hell by disobedience to God ; for the doctrines of Heaven and Hell were not only unknown to him, but to Moses also, and the Jews generally of the Old Testament, since to them even the doctrine of a future life was unknown. Moses never says to the Jews, as he was bound to say if he had known it, "Do good and you will go to Heaven when you die ; but if you do evil you will go to Hell". He gives, however, the best encouragement and warning that he can. He does not even say to them, "Take care ; there may possibly be a

future life; and who knows what rewards and punishments may be in store for you?" What he says is this: "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it." Success in this life only, you see, is all that Moses has to offer as the result of loving the Lord their God, of walking in his ways, and of keeping his commandments and his statutes and his judgments. It never entered into the mind of Moses that man is immortal, and this entirely agrees with the story of the loss of Paradise. There it is expressly taught that man is but breathing dust, and that, when his breath is out, he returns to it; and that, though originally capable of immortality, the way to the tree of eternal life is barred as by cherubim and a flaming sword.

The doctrine of immortality is a growth of much later date. We see, then, how erroneous is the doctrine of the Fall of Man as it is commonly held by the unreflecting. It is nowhere taught in Scripture, except by St. Paul; and the reason why it was taught by him has already been explained. It must be plain to the intelligent, and even to the unintelligent, reader, that if it had been held by the other Scripture writers, it would have frequently been referred to in the Bible; but especially it is absurd to suppose, that the story of the lost Paradise meant for Moses that, by eating the forbidden fruit, Adam made himself and his race liable not only to the miseries of this life, but to the pains of hell-fire forever, when we see that, by what he says to the children of Israel, he must have believed that, when he and they died, their souls would go out like so many candles.

77. Bacon wrote a little book in which he shews that the mythological fables of Greece contain a vast amount of profound wisdom. In the noble preface to it, he says: "Fables in general are composed of ductile matter, that may be drawn into great variety by a witty talent or an inventive genius, and be delivered of plausible meanings which they never contained. But this procedure has already been

carried to excess; and great numbers, to procure the sanction of antiquity to their own notions and inventions, have miserably wrested and abused the fables of the ancients." Again: "It were very injudicious to suffer the fondness and licentiousness of a few to detract from the honour of allegory and parable in general. This would be rash, and almost profane; for, since religion delights in such shadows and disguises, to abolish them were, in a manner, to prohibit all intercourse betwixt things human and divine." Again: "Some of these fables are so absurd and idle in their narration as to shew and proclaim an allegory, even afar off". He regards those fables, not as the inventions of those who relate them, "but as sacred relics, gentle whispers, and the breath of better times, that from the traditions of more ancient nations came, at length, into the flutes and trumpets of the Greeks". And again he says: "In the first ages, when such inventions and conclusions of the human reason as are now trite and common were new and little known, all things abounded with fables, parables, similes, comparisons, and allusions, which were not intended to conceal, but to inform and teach, whilst the minds of men continued rude and unpractised in matters of subtilty and speculation, or even impatient and in a manner incapable of receiving such

things as did not directly fall under and strike the senses. For as hieroglyphics were in use before writing, so were parables in use before arguments. And even to this day, if any man would let new light in upon the human understanding, and conquer prejudice, without raising contests, animosities, opposition, or disturbance, he must still go in the same path, and have recourse to the like method of allegory, metaphor, and allusion."

78. These excellent remarks of Bacon on ancient fables will, if well considered, throw great light upon the story of a lost Paradise. For that story is, with its speaking serpent, etc., so absurd and idle in its narration as to proclaim an allegory at the distance of a mile. It was invented, not for the purpose of concealing, but for revealing truth to the simple minds of a rude unreflecting age. It is composed of ductile matter, and can be drawn out into a great variety of plausible meanings which it does not contain. And yet under its shadows and disguises, under its "monstrous fiction," it certainly discourses of things divine, which are "singularly great and noble". It contains the sacred relics of what the earliest philosophy tried to teach bewildered man. What that teaching was, so far as this fable is concerned, we think it easy enough to discover.

79. From what we have shewn to be the nature of Spirit, the reader knows that long ages had passed away before man would attempt to account for his existence, and for his manner of existence, and that there would be many unconscious attempts at it, before there was any clearly conscious attempt. The first unconscious attempt of value would be made by a man who was potentially a great poet, and as the very nature of Spirit is truth as well as freedom (and it is only freedom because truth), this first attempt would, for its time, contain a noble portion of truth, virtually the seed of the whole truth. Men in general would not be able to recognise it, just as men in general are always unable to recognise the highest truth of their own time, but the spirits of the same order, few in number, but all-important, like the leaders of all ages, would hail the light. The new truth would be canvassed and contradicted by prosaic spirits, and, as the nature of it is, it would grow by contradiction and conflict. The attempts to unfold and express itself would become more and more conscious. Men would begin to feel and see that there was a Power in the universe of a most beneficent nature on the whole; that the wonderful lamp of day never once failed, but was faithful every morning; that the moon and stars had their times; that the nature of

man was unspeakably above that of the beasts of the field, which, with all other things, seemed as if made for him : and yet, in nature, earthquakes, tempests, wild beasts, etc., and, in man himself, murder and other evils—disorder without and disorder within—under the eye of a Power on the whole beneficent, and manifestly so great as to be equal to anything : what could they think ? Their problem was : How is it that this beneficent Power can allow such things ? Profoundly meditating on the matter, it struck the great believing heart of some poet one day, that it was not always so, that it could not always have been so ; that the great beneficent Power must have made man for bliss, and that the fault is all in man somehow. And how ? How but by disobedience ? The Power must have meant it to be wholly well with his creatures ; he could not have meant that man was to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, and especially he could not have put thistles and thorns there just for the very purpose of being in his way, nor surely could he have meant originally that woman was to suffer so in childbirth. Look at the happiness of the child, when everything is provided for it ; happy in its ignorance : such an ignorant happiness the beneficent Power must have meant for man, with work only for amusement, something pleasant

to create a good appetite, such, perhaps, as keeping a garden. The child's grief begins with, and increases with its knowledge. Ah! it is with *knowledge* that man's grief must have begun. How curious to know men are, and women still more so! especially things forbidden. The acquisition of some forbidden knowledge must have been the beginning of all evils, and the first woman would probably be the first to seek that knowledge. Yes, I see the truth, *that* must have been it. But created to be naturally obedient, how could she do it? She must have been misled. But by whom? How strange that none of the animals can speak, especially the serpent, so very wise as it is. I suspect it could speak at first. I see it. The serpent must have spoken once, and is now deprived of its gift of speech for cheating the woman, in its malice and envy and guile. That is just. The great Power is good. The great Power would not always have remained away behind the blue sky; at first, he would talk with and instruct man; but incensed at his disobedience and ingratitude he has withdrawn forever to his own grand home, leaving man to his search for knowledge, which in self-defence, as well as for punishment, he must now pursue. Yes, knowledge is grief. But he has not forgotten us altogether. How he thunders when

he is angry with us, and darts his terrible lightnings! But his very anger shows that he has not altogether forsaken us. No, he is good, and for all his anger, he must mean something good for us in the long-run, whatever that good may be. Who can think what it may be? He would not allow himself to be defeated of his purposes by a serpent. He continues us in existence for some great purpose, though every individual of us goes back to the dust; but surely when he first made us, it was to live always. He must have provided means for that. I see it all, I see it all!

80. Some such meditation as this, by some primitive poet, was, indeed, inevitable, when we consider the nature of Spirit, which is to endeavour to master its circumstances in all their extent; and we can realize the joy with which he would half-unconsciously embody his meditation in an interesting form, in a great and child-like way, as it has been done in the fable of a lost Paradise, not to conceal his *truth* (that is to say, what he *trowed*, what he had become convinced of), but to reveal it; and it is easy also to realize how welcome it would be to the struggling child-like thought of that early time. That primitive poet would be fully the Tennyson, and his fable fully the *In Memoriam*, of the day, and be hailed as perhaps the high-

water mark of thought for all time. And what could his fellows think of one who had such a gift of light in him? He must be inspired by that very Being whose anger in the thunder and lightning, as well as complacency in the sunshine, shewed that he cared for them. Yes, that Being must have meant that we should at last know what his prophet has revealed. So it was natural that they should think; and as true too as natural; for a great poet and spiritual bringer of light is the greatest gift that God can give to the world.

81. But while the poet, more or less consciously (for hitherto thought would be little distinguishable from feeling, or rather would be embedded in it), embodied his mind, that embodiment would ideally contain more than he intended, and be, as it were, the egg from which winged thought would ultimately emerge. This is a necessity of the nature of Spirit; and it might easily, and was likely to, happen, that not more merely, but a vast deal more, might be ideally contained in it. We shall now try to see what is in this fable of a lost Paradise beyond the poet's intention, and that without in the least incurring Bacon's censure of drawing the ductile material to suit our fancies and preconceived opinions. We shall abide by what seems the strictest necessity of thought, far

remote indeed from the region of mere opinion and fancy.

82. Beings newly created, as Adam and Eve are represented, in the forms of a full-grown man and woman, would still be really babies, and the idea of such beings being able to think at all, not to speak of speaking, is inconceivably absurd; and if you fancy some supernatural Power thinking and speaking in them, even if that were possible, then they were not really persons but puppets. But, for our occasion, let us think of them just as they are represented; that is to say, as thinking in some degree and speaking, like young children. They are happy, but their happiness is that of childhood, and they can only think and speak as children. Children enjoy such a paradise under the protection of their parents, caring nothing for their defects, that is, naked and yet not ashamed, as Adam and Eve enjoyed under the protection of the Lord God. They do not yet know good and evil, though their parents know them, who are as gods to them, therefore; and as soon as they begin to know good and evil, their eyes are opened, they die, and they are as if *driven* out of their paradise. Their eyes are opened, they see their *defects*, their wants; they die, the happy life of childhood can no longer be theirs; and time itself, with its inevitable stride, drives

them out of their ignorant innocent condition. But this is an advance. It is impossible to *know* good except by evil, or evil except by good. If the big boy and girl, Adam and Eve, were to be developed at all, a process of development must be gone through, and a permanent state of animal innocence and enjoyment could not furnish the means of it; they must, like the rest of us, fall to rise, and die to live. But that this should be, there must be restraint, law. The mere animals, a dog or a horse, cannot die to live morally: they are all alive without the law, and no commandment can come to them that the consciousness of restraint should create in them all manner of concupiscence, that sin should live in them, and they die. They do not stand between a higher and a lower, like Adam and Eve, and like every other child; and it is because they cannot die, that they cannot live. To begin to know good and evil, therefore, is the first necessary step towards the development of Spirit, towards a higher life, which can only be attained by the loss of a child's-paradise, and by grief and struggle. The life of the child, like the life of Adam and Eve, is a sensuous life, however pure it may be; it is a life of Nature, which has always the first possession. But it is a life in which Nature is yet unknown; for to know

Nature is to develop Spirit. The first fault of the child is usually in relation to something forbidden which is not in its own nature sinful, just like the inhibited fruit of a tree, and it cannot run to meet its parent with open-hearted glee as before, though the parent does not yet know of its guilt. On being questioned, the child shifts the blame from his own shoulders to his brother, who told him to do it, and he again to another. Spirit is yet weak: if the child could say ingenuously, without blaming others, "Father, I have done wrong," what a step in the progress of development of Spirit would that shew, and how bright might the parent's hopes justly be for that strong child! But it is in the nature of Spirit that such strength should come late. Spirit must part with mere Nature, subdue Nature, and know something of its own grandeur before that. Man must know, not by hearsay, but for himself, a knowledge only to be won by pain, the duality of his nature as dust and divine breath, and declare for the high and renounce the low; but he must know what he renounces, and for what other it is that he renounces it. This belongs not to boyhood, but to manhood, or if, in some cases, to adolescence, the stage between, it *ipso facto* shews a certain uncommon ripeness of manhood then.

83. The Lord God in one aspect represents our higher nature, the serpent our lower nature; and, in a struggle between the two, the latter must win at first in order that its head might be bruised at last. For Spirit must be free, and it cannot be free, or (which is the same thing) know itself free, till it has tried its strength with every enemy, without and within, and overcome. Accordingly it follows that the Lord God, the higher nature at that stage, must lose, in order to triumph at last. For as heaven is just as high as hell is deep, for man to have eaten of the tree of life before eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would have been to win a low heaven, a child's heaven, a heaven whose innocence would have been the innocence of ignorance, and not of wisdom. And even after the eating of the forbidden tree, the Lord God did friendly and wisely to protect the tree of life, not forbidden, and therefore not desired; that the cherubim and the flaming sword, by shewing as it were what precious thing had been lost or rather not yet gained, might awaken for the tree the desire of all nations, after they had seen into the infinite deeps of the hell of divided spirit, but not before. Were once the desire for it great enough, the way to it were as good as open again. Round that tree was the city of God then to be built;

for in the midst of the street of it, as it is written, there is now the tree of life.

84. Our lower nature is well described, in the serpent, as "more subtil than any beast of the field that the Lord God had made". It does not and cannot know the dignity of the higher nature, but has towards it as it were an instinctive malice, as soon as there is an antagonism between them through something forbidden; and at the stage when the separation between them is yet not wide, and the struggle not begun, it makes its way by fascinating the higher, through means even of what is then best in the higher. Its whispers, suggestions, promises, actuate the Spirit to take as it were a first *independent* step; for if that step were one taken wholly trusting in the serpent, it would not essentially differ from one taken wholly trusting the Lord God. The serpent's contradiction of the Lord God it was that gave its first freedom to the Spirit; for the woman had of necessity to perform a spiritual act, namely, to *decide* one way or the other. Mechanical obedience to the Lord God was no longer possible for her. Spirit learns its alphabet and to read a little—n, o, *no*, y, e, s, *yes*—in the dame-school of experience. The Lord God had not warned her of any serpent, and, if he had done so, her knowledge would have been hear-

say, that is, not spiritual, but belonging to the senses and the memory. So "when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she"—for all these good reasons, as they seemed to her—"took of the fruit thereof, and did eat". The first and second reasons are purely sensual, but the third and highest reason is only partly so. It is wonderfully expressed: "a tree to be desired to make one wise". What words could better show the first and lowest attempt of Spirit at self-development, before it knew itself at all, and was as yet not capable of extrication from its opposite, from its lower, which, though opposed, is still its own, and there to be used for its development?

85. The first knowledge is a knowledge of "nakedness," of defect and want; and must precede the invention of arts. "They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons." It was a first step towards much more than the last Parisian fashion in dress; and when you see a lady, in full sail, gracefully doubling a corner of one of our great streets, "like a stately ship of Tarsus, bound for the isles of Javan or Gadire," or lolling in her chariot, in all the glory of her summer garments, and then think of our poor first parent Eve, and her simple green

apron, sewed with needle of thorn and thread of withered grass, you can take her as a type of a great development of Spirit in other directions too besides that of clothing.

86. A higher development of Spirit is suggested by the words: "and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee". Ignorant or mechanical obedience under a common master is equality, but the very nature of spiritual development is rule and subordination; and the rule of the husband is the type of the whole development of man's spirit in relation to law and order. The chief of a tribe, the king of a nation, the provost of a city, the captain of a ship, the commander of an army, the chairman of a public meeting, the master of a school, and every rank and degree of rule, may be considered to have their type in the head of the family. But obedience must be slavish before it is free. As free, it is a blessing and not a curse; but man had a long way to go before he could reach the blessing.

87. If, in addition to what we have said, we notice that the Lord God recognises the truth of the serpent's prophecy, and says, "Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil," while the Lord God's own threat of death is not carried out, and that, therefore, he seems for the time to be in an equivocal posi-

tion, it is impossible not to be struck with the prodigious profundity of this fable as embodying an approximately adequate conception of the nature and history of Spirit. The Spirit of Denial is the necessary opposite of the Spirit of Affirmation, and the Yes cannot be without the No ; the two are one as well as two ; and for man to arrive at the Yes is impossible without first experiencing what the No has to offer. If ever man is to arrive at the Yes, and really to know, not by hearsay, but for himself, what is good, he must come to it enriched and strengthened by the suffering and tribulation of the No. All knowledge is frivolous, unimportant, compared with this. To know good and evil is the only way to become god-like ; and so implacable Love "drove out the man," and "placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life". When, through Christ, in the fulness of time, man's spirit, after boundless negation, is capable of boundless affirmation, he will be able to "put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever".

88. The universe, as we have said, is moral ; for excellence of character is the highest and best of all possible things in this or in any world. Not merely the possession of wealth,

not merely the possession of dry learning, but even genius of intellect itself, sinks almost out of sight beneath genius of heart. It is a truth, but ill-expressed, "Heaven kindly gave our blood a moral flow". As if indeed that could have been otherwise! Without such a flow, the whole universe would have been other than it is; for, as we have shewn, the universe is what it is by what it is for man. As the highest in man is his moral nature, it must therefore be said that the universe is moral. Another verse is towards the same truth, "An honest man's the noblest work of God". The universe may be said to exist for the production of honest noble spirits. The Jews seized this greatest of all truths as no other nation has done. It goes through all the books of the Bible as the one doctrine, that God, the maker of heaven and earth, is righteous, requiring righteousness in his intelligent creatures. They are intelligent in order to be righteous. Intelligence is as the eye; but the very nature of Spirit is to achieve freedom by activity, and its eye sees in order that it may *do* something. Spirit, even when it seems most inert, is active, and is continually expressing itself. It has many modes of doing this. First of all is the body; as Spenser Platonising sings, "The soul is form and doth the body make". It is be-

cause your spirit made your face, that your face is significant of it, and your face is not the less significant because it was made *unconsciously* in your mother's womb, according to the nature of your race, by the terrible laws of the blood. The shew of your countenance witnesses in your favour or against you. You are not free from the exercise of moral laws even in your sleep. The centre of your being within, and the well-spring and fountain of your blood, as well as its function, are bound by moral laws to the whole universe every moment of the night and day, laws that are spirit and execute themselves with an irresistible power and with an unerring vigilance that leave nothing to be desired. You never talked with a neighbour, you never walked along a street, you never read a newspaper, you never exercised one of your senses, you never did anything, materially or spiritually, or left anything undone, without, in some degree or other, the reward or punishment of moral law. Yourself, and your life, in every smallest part thereof, are but illustrations of the inevitable power of moral law. Your face, your manners, your gait, your tone, your speech, your silence, your breathing, your accent, your choice of words, your emphasis, your smile, your laughter, what you will and what you will not smile or laugh at, your sneering and its charac-

teristics, your earnest, your jest, your clothes, your house, your furniture, your books, your husband, your wife, your children, your companions, all these, and all else of yours, are significant of you, by the prevalence of moral law, penetrating every minutest portion of all your being, from before birth, from the very moment even that you entered the universe, the kingdom (to use again the simple but grand words of Stirling) of That Which Could Not But Be. You cannot hide from it for a moment, it is in you ; you cannot flee from its presence, it is behind and before and above and below you. The attempt even to do so, the thought even of doing so, would leave its cowardly mark deep in your spirit. The wings of the morning are there for *it*, and fly towards it as they leave it behind. Everything, therefore, both natural and intelligent, exists for the moral. The universe is moral.

89. We are now in a position to ascertain that Christianity is in very deed not only revealed religion, but the highest religion that ever can be revealed. But what is Christianity ? It is the full revelation of a method whereby man may attain the highest perfection of his being. It is essential that we should ignore this and that claim of different churches to represent Christianity, and examine only the

teaching and example of Jesus himself. Now, he never says, If any man would be my disciple, let him believe in the Trinity, or in Transubstantiation, or in Adult Baptism, or in Immortality, or in any other doctrine whatever, be it true or no ; but his words are these, " If any man would be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me ". *That*, says Jesus, constitutes discipleship, and not the holding of these or those doctrines. It is not to deny yourself this or the other thing, or even *all* things : it is to deny *yourself*. Christ denied himself, and took up his cross daily. But in denying himself, he attained the highest perfection of his nature, and by following him, that is to say, by doing what he did, you can attain the highest perfection of yours. But what is it to deny oneself ? It is to affirm and assert your better self, by opposing and denying your lower self. You say Yes by saying No, and you are *for* by being *against*. Your higher self and lower self are one as well as two. Your higher self could not *will* except for the *desires* of your lower self. We might say, proverb-like, Multeity of velleity makes a man unlike the Deity. All mere wishes and desires belong to our lower nature ; but will belongs to our higher. No man yet ever truly willed to do what was wrong when he did it ; he only wished to do it,

and his true will was overborne. Christ cries into us, Let your will reign and your spirit will be free. But self-denial is only the beginning, the strait gate, which it requires an agonizing struggle to enter. After entrance, the yoke is easy, the burden light ; there is rest for the soul in conscious union with God, here, in this life, in the kingdom of God, which is *within*. The beginning is self-denial, but the end is the affirmation of a new noble self full of God.

90. An open-minded honest reading of the Gospels will show clearly that this and this alone is Christianity. Christianity, as a life, is conscious union with God, and, as a doctrine, the full revelation of the method of attaining this union. We have merely mentioned the beginning of this method, and for the purpose of our argument, it is not necessary to develop the matter farther. Yet let us say this, that had Christ not loved his enemies, and taught us to love ours, some one would have come after him able to do it, and would have superseded him. But we are engaged with the philosophy of all revelation, and not, except subsidiarily, with any revelation in particular. Our object is to shew the unspeakable dignity of human nature, by shewing that all possible revelation is a revelation of man to himself. The law was a schoolmaster to bring to Christ, who came in

the fulness of time, when the world was more or less ready for him. When he came, the man Jesus Christ, he lived, and went away again, and left nothing of himself here. His thoughts and feelings were his own, and he took them with him : spiritual things, unlike natural things, cannot be given away. But this is the nature of Spirit—to *love* and to *know* ; to possess what is incapable of division, though equally possessed by other spirits. But for a spirit to possess is to be ; a spirit *is* what he loves and knows : in other words, a spirit realizes himself by love and thought. Christ loved and thought and lived the truth, before he could speak the truth, and say, " I am the truth ". When Pilate asked, " What is truth ? " Christ gave him no answer, because he was incapable of understanding the true answer. Truth is spirit and life, and not hearsay and words and definitions. But even hearsay and words and definitions, these comparatively external things, can only be made mine by a previous realization of myself to an extent rendering me capable of making them mine, as already explained.

91. Now, Nature, as we know it, is within us ; Spirit, of course, as only it can be known, is within. We can know nothing except within us. As we said before, it concerns us not whether or no there be a world without us,

since we can only know it within. The man Christ Jesus appeared in Nature, and said, "I came forth from God," and again, "I came down from Heaven". This, though it is also said, "There was a man sent from God whose name was John," is generally taken to mean that Christ existed before he was in this world. But to us, in the Spirit, if the reader has well understood, it is absolutely of no consequence whatever where he came from or where he went to. If the reader has now, as now he ought to have, his eyes wide open to the Higher Orthodoxy, he will see clearly, that all such questions of an external nature belong only to the Higher Gossip. That Christ came down from Heaven, that he was born of a virgin, that he rose from the dead, that he ascended up into Heaven, and all such externalities, even if they took place, were mere fact, and not truth. What I want is truth and self-development, and my spirit is just as lean as it was, after knowing any number of mere facts, however surprising or uncommon they may be. I am beyond the gaping stage, and when you tell me, the son of a married woman, that Christ was born of a virgin, thinking his a more miraculous birth than mine, I would laugh at your ignorance and simplicity, if I did not well know how horn-hardening and stupefying to the mind it is to repeat, for long years,

hearsay follies, and how all-too natural it is also to repeat them. Marvels which are continually witnessed are seldom observed. There is nothing more wonderful in heaven or earth than the ordinary birth of a mouse ; it is surely miraculous enough ; and it is only stupidity that can keep anybody from seeing that. We read that Christ himself thought little of his own miracles in comparison with the miracles to be afterwards wrought by his followers through the Spirit ; and he was right : all his miracles in a bunch were nothing compared with that *one* miracle of the Spirit in our own day, the abolition of the American slave-trade. " Greater things than these will ye do, because ye believe in me," said Christ ; and but for these greater things, the Christian religion would have been but a poor affair. It is by abiding by externalities that so many Christians are so thin, so very-very thin-thin, like a leaf, a wafer, a coin from which both Cæsar and his superscription have entirely vanished. They choose rather to live in a narrow, petty, deadening, formal round of so-called worship and ceremonies, in eager meagre evangelicalisms, in Christolatry* and Bibliolatry, ignorant that they are called upon to take a share in working miracles of the Spirit com-

* See Appendix, Note III.

pared with which the miracles recorded of Christ are but mean.

92. The history of mankind is the history of the coming of the Spirit, and all men, and especially great men, are illustrations of that coming. There never was a time when the Spirit had not come, but it is its nature to transcend itself, so that looking back it appears at any stage as if it had not yet come. It comes to men and nations according to laws of its own, which are yet but very partially discovered. It comes in various ways, stays its own time; sometimes, insulted and grieved, it goes away from nations as from individual men. But to every man, and to every nation, it comes as a spirit of freedom. It came to the Greek chiefly as the spirit of art and philosophy; to the Roman chiefly as the spirit of public law and government; to the Jew chiefly as the spirit of righteousness. And the reception of the spirit of righteousness was so perfect in Christ, that he became conscious of union with God, and could announce to us how we also might rise to consciousness of that union. He did not die, as theological folly has asserted, to reconcile God to us; but "God was in him, reconciling the world to himself".

93. When the period of the world's history at which Christ appeared is considered, it might

almost be said that Spirit, put upon its mettle produced him, just as Nature, put upon her mettle, acquits herself in great style, when she fills up a fissure in a rock with crystals. Spirit is forever proceeding to ultimate itself. The extremity of realized ultimation is forever perishing, whilst the ideal centre of Spirit, forever forcing itself forward, forever lives. Everything in history, therefore, as in nature, is forever changing. No institution is absolutely the same for a single day, though often it may seem to be the same, and is, for all practical purposes, quite the same, for many years. But for all that, to the Spirit it is actually not the same for an hour. To the vulgar eye, the institution is an isolated and steady thing; but, to the scientific eye, it is a part of the ever-changing whole. Vapour changes visibly, and the rock invisibly, but the one is not in the least degree more subject to the law of change than the other. So it is with all institutions. Institutions depend on the minds of men, and though there is no visible alteration in the institution, any more than in the rock, for a long period, every minute brings on the time when the necessary though slow change in men's ways of thinking and feeling will bring along with it the visible alteration and the downfall too of that institution. At the advent

of Christ the world's religions and institutions were all but out-worn, and where the spirit of righteousness and poetry had wrought with such vital power for so many ages in those burning prophets of the soul, its voice had already gone dumb for four hundred years, and had been succeeded by a dry and withering spirit of theology and argument. The scribes and pharisees had studied the dead prophets so much mechanically that they could not recognise a living one when they saw him. A book can be read only by the same spirit that made it or a higher, and want of spirit was their one great want. Their souls were attempting to live on paper and ink. Though they cherished one great hope, the hope of a deliverer, they did not know that the Spirit never literally and narrowly fulfils its promises, but largely and spiritually. The national pride was humiliated; they longed for the successor of David who was to free them from the Roman yoke. But their genius was not for empire. In this forlorn state, there came a great last outburst of the national genius for righteousness, just when that genius seemed like a gibbering ghost among the ruins of the past, and when melodious living incarnations of it seemed gone forever. A deliverer appeared, indeed, but it was the Saviour of the World. Then was

witnessed the most awful illustration of a principle that lies in the very nature of Spirit, a principle which is illustrated everywhere, at all times, and in regard to all things, but chiefly in regard to religion, the deadly opposition of the children of the letter to the children of the Spirit. It is the children of the letter who in all ages have put the prophets to death; and these very children in every country do put them to death still *as far as they can*. They can only in general exercise now, however, spite in their hearts and with their tongues; and they do not know, any more than did their predecessors, who actually killed the prophets, that they are of their father the killing letter, whose works they verily do, and that the children of the Spirit, whom they hate and withstand, are the brothers and successors of those whose spirit embodied itself in that very letter, then living as the body of Spirit, but now (as vipers kill though dead) both dead and killing. They fancy, indeed, that they are of God and of the Spirit, they; they are very cautious and safe, they, and abide by the traditions of the elders, good men of old who bottled the truth for them and for all time in creeds and phrases: how do they know that what is new is true? Right: how should *they* know, who exclude God and Spirit from them-

given them instead of words, words, words ;
 nay, the priest himself had not managed to
 stifle utterly in his own soul a certain such dim
 sense or dull longing, though he had perhaps
 scarcely any perception whatever of his position,
 so ridiculous if it were not ruinous, of a make-
 believe shepherd :

Their lean and flashy Songs
 Grate on their scrannel Pipes of wretched straw.
 The hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed. *

95. In killing the prophet, they did not kill his prophecy ; there were some who knew how to value it, who treasured it, and loved it, and read it, and their number continued to increase, till it became, probably after the death of the leaders in the prophet's ruin, the conviction of the nation that the martyred prophet was indeed a messenger of the Most High. Then his sepulchre was built and garnished, with late repentant love and reverence. His words became sacred, as expressing men's feelings and thoughts with power and beauty ; for the progress of Spirit had now at last brought men in general near enough to the standpoint of the prophet to appreciate his utterances. And all this took place over and over again from age to age—the prophet's tragedy, as we may call

* See Appendix, Note IV.

it—the conflict between the children of the slavish ignoble letter and the martyrs of the noble free spirit; a *necessary* conflict, in one or another degree, in the progress of Spirit in all times and places, and it is going on, as we find, even at present, when indifference, which is, for the most part, the soul of our toleration, so greatly predominates. The children of the letter put Jesus to death in the name of Moses, and they are still at their work in the name of Jesus.

96. At this moment, there is a very great battle going on all round you, in religion as well as in politics, between the children of the letter and the children of the Spirit. The battle will be hotter yet before the century, ay, and before this eighth decade, is out. You have taken, or will take, the one side or the other, according to your kind. But if you are a poor half-man, neither a son of the letter nor a son of the Spirit, you may be ready to stifle enquiry, and persecute a child of the Spirit, or support him and encourage enquiry, just as you expect that there will or will not be a sufficient number in the General Assembly to back you, and while thus acting with adroitness and sly Ulyssean cunning, you may have the conscience to preach a funeral sermon praising the Dead for having possessed the simplicity that is in

Christ. Or again, if you are a poor half-man, having subscribed the *Confession of Faith*, you may, both by your preaching, and by your Browning-Tennysonian-echo so-called poems, fully belie up to the safe line, and quite ignore, which is always safe in an *aut vitam aut culpam* situation, the doctrine you engaged to teach—pocketing the money of the church, and at the same time the praise of its enemies; very adroit conduct too. Balaam could not curse Jacob and defy Israel, and yet he liked the king's countenance and coin. But poor Balaam had something true in him: he *could* speak and write without affectation; and there is the right poetic ring in the one piece of verse which he has left. And, in a question of comparison, let us remember this too in Balaam's favour, that he never undertook to preach, that God from all eternity had, out of the mere good pleasure of his will, and without foresight of any evil to be committed by them, foreordained multitudes of human creatures to be burned in everlasting fire, for nothing else but for having been present by his decree in the loins of Adam, in surely an excessively slender and unconscious to be a responsible manner, where they could not help being, when he ate of the forbidden fruit, thousands of years before they knew anything of the fact, which they only

learned in being taught the gospel of the grace of God, some years after they were born ; and born to be whipped too, some of them, for not answering correctly, when they were merry little boys going through school on their way to hell, the question, "What are the decrees of God?" No, Balaam the First, when he was a flashily-eloquent young man, fresh from college, and exceedingly desirous of a good manse, would have disdained to promise to preach *that*. So, too, would his ass.

97. The child of the Spirit will not acquit himself well in the war of liberation, and help us on to victory as he might do, unless he fully knows the philosophy of all revelation—how it is that nothing can be revealed to him except himself, and that all else, however apparently well supported by forensic logic, is only hearsay, at best probability. All revelation is self-realization. The whole world of Nature without, I can only perceive by and in my senses, and reduce (or, say, raise) to contents of Spirit by means of category. All history too, the history of to-day, of events of which I am witness, as the history of the past milleniums, all the actions of my fellow-creatures as well as my fellow-creatures themselves, I can only know within me. Were there a God altogether distinct from myself, I could only know him

within. Everything, as it is possible for me to know it, is *within*. But like can only be known to like. Were Nature not at bottom Spirit, Spirit could not realize itself by means of Nature. And we can know God only in so far as we realize him in ourselves and therefore are him. There can be nothing for us external to ourselves.

98. The one rule for you, then, is this : Be, aim at being, in your spirit what you ought to be, and you will cease to care for hearsay—for what must be hearsay, and worthless to Spirit as spirit, even if it were true. See that you are really risen with Christ in the Spirit, which is the true birth of Spirit, and you will care nothing, as regards religion, whether Christ was born of a virgin, or raised from the dead, or no. It is of no consequence to Spirit where Christ came from or where he went to; but it is of the utmost consequence to Spirit, that Spirit should have realized itself so as to be able to hold that that, and all other externalities, are of no consequence to it. Christ's birth and resurrection are simply questions for science; and religion should frankly give them over to science. If science should, as perhaps not improbable, make short work with them, it would not be for the first time that religion has been well and faithfully served by her handmaid.

99. Since my Bible, and all Bibles, are only paper, and ink, and pasteboard, and paste, and thread, etc., it can be of no consequence to Spirit to know, for instance, who wrote John's Gospel. The only question for Spirit is, what categories it has mastered in order to enable it to realize in itself the ideal substance of John's Gospel, as already explained, not by *getting* anything passively, but by *giving*. Spirit can only get by what itself gives: none, not even God, can make a present to Spirit. Such is the greatness and dignity of man. He can only get by giving, he can only live by dying. As it has been written by a master, *Stirb und werde*: die that you may be.

100. Our matter might easily have been spread out thin to a long treatise, but we would not grind our seed-corn. Many clever and seemingly honest minds, but minds surely essentially weak and foolish, are now walking in the thick darkness of brutal Atheism; and to the question, *Canst thou by searching find out God?* we have here given, both in the intellectual and moral sense, together with the proof, the answer, *If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee*. We have also conclusively shewed, that that answer and proof, in the moral sense, involves the truth of Christianity, the highest possible religion, and that, as spirits,

we are living, even now, in the Eternal Kingdom of That Which Could Not But Be. The question of personal immortality did not fall to be separately considered; but it may just be stated that the more highly we are able to think of the dignity and greatness of human nature, the more hope there evidently is for personal immortality.

101. But we shall now conclude, having thrust our Left Arm into the Sleeve of our Singing Robes. When I consider the Faces of **MEN**, and how the covering Clouds form deep and cling, or lightly again disperse, spun off by the Mystic Influence of Secret Thoughts of Hope and Courage, or roll heavily away at the Advent of Fairer Fortune, or, gradually absorbed by the Strong Long-sustaining Spirit, vanish, or, charged with Grief too burdensome to bear, dissolve in Tears, where the Radiant Smile lately lighted up, like a Serene Sky, the Heavenly Countenance, and when I consider the Eyes of **MEN** beaming with God-like Intelligence and Love, and how **MEN** can make Air the Medium for pouring as it were the Contents of their Divine Souls into each other's Ears as into Cups, and how they are reared in Families round the Parental Hearth, and have Holy Sweet Affection for Reverend Father and Tender Mother, and Brother, and Sister, an imperfect

Image of the Deep Love for the Child, comparable to a Well-Spring of Eternity bursting up into Time, and how they learn the Elements of Redeeming Lore from Lips and from Eyes of Faces over whose ancient Sorrow there is plainly written VICTORY, Lips and Eyes ready with glad and Gladdening Smile of Approbation, and ready, too, with Stern Glance and Firm Word of needful Check, or high correcting Rebuke, and how they bear through Life the Sacred Memories of the Heart's First Bloom, and how, disdaining Limits, they embrace their City and its Neighbourhood, their Native Land, and the World, and (a Thing worthy to make God himself glory in the Deepest Deep of his Being, as Proof Consummate of his Consummate Success, and but for which his Failure and Defeat would have been as consummate) how, with Love rising to the Highest Height of Self-sacrificial Energy, and shewing its Unbounded Force of Innate Character, they, identifying themselves to Absolute Self-forgetfulness with a Righteous Cause, would suffer themselves to be crushed to Annihilation, and would endure even Everlasting Curse for its sake, I exclaim, What is the STARRY FIRMAMENT, its innumerable Islets eyelike sparkling and glistening as with the intensest Soul itself of Uncreated Light, and filling the Boundless Abyss of Ethereal Blue, or

what the MOON, at the fullest, gazing leisurely abroad about her, bright and clear, in her long, calm, solitary, slow Procession of Midnight Glory, or what the SUN, when, returning from the South, he brings back the Mild Year, and Wild-howling Winter flies from his Face, and Nature again puts on her Flower-spotted Green Garment, and, for Joy of his Coming, the Birds, the Merry-hearted Little Feathered Fellows of the Wood and Field, break out into Singing, while, filled by his Kindly Heat with Genial Courage, they mate, and build their Hopeful Nests among the green Leafy Branches, and the thick green growing Grass, and, Chief of Song, the Lark, springing from the Furrow, mounts up, ever singing, though often half-inclined to pause and to poise as on slow Meditative Pinion, high into Heaven, till he is wholly hid in the Far Liquid Blue, or is but barely seen, a Dim Speck, on the Vapoury Fringe of some White Cloud, pouring out his full Melodious Heart, which, inexhaustible, seems to fill again faster than he can pour it forth, *tirra, lirra, lirra, trill, trill, trill, trill*, and the Cuckoo comes, and the Swallow, and the Year grows rank and lush, and brightens with Blossoming Roses, beneath the fostering Eye, and even the Desert is glad, and the Heath clothes itself in Purple, and the Year ripens apace, and waves far and wide with

Yellow Harvests, and hangs in Rich Adornment of Red Apple and Purple Grape, heedless yet of the coming surly Rebuke again preparing in the far cold North, or what the SUN, when, lately risen,—Night in her Dark Robe having already long fled with Hurrying Step over the Western Hills in Terror of his Approaching Presence, who forever chases her (as Truth Error) with Unrelenting Persistence round the World,—he, with Morning Freshness, scales the steep Eternal Heights, in unwearied Vigour of Imperishable Prime, and the Ocean burns broad beneath his Beamy Path like one mighty multitudinous moving Mass of Molten Gold, never to be coined for Covetousness, and Leafy Wood and Grassy Meadow glitter gloriously with Dew-Drops of Heavenly Hue hanging on Blade and Leaf, and, in their various, resplendent, though transitory, Lustre, the Emeralds, the Amethysts, the Topazes, the Opals, the Rubies, the Sapphires, the Diamonds of an Hour, as they gleam and glow and burn, outvie the Brightest Gems adorning the Queens of the Earth, or when, brilliant beyond beholding, he, the SUN, dazzles the daring Eye, riding on in Ineffable Might and Majesty of Noontide Triumph, as if repressing an Exulting Shout, so joyful in the Consciousness of his Irresistibly-penetrating Power, that hid the Fire in the Flint, and filled

the Jewel with Light, and with Far-reaching Invisible Influence finds the Roots of the Pale and Sapless Vegetation of the Deep, and, in its Blind Creeping Creatures, calls forth, as if for once in Futile Compassion, vague Hints of Unnecessary Eyes, and that, with High Summons to Ocean, and Sea, and Lake, and Mighty River, with strict Intimation, too, sent to every Stream, and Brook, and Rill, and Pool, and Marsh, not to fail of their respective Contingents at his great Bidding, raises from Vapour and marshals in the Vast Space of his Circuit, as they tread upon Nothing, in long-drawn Ranks of War, the Files of Threatening Cloud, charged with insupportable Sulphureous Fury, ready to burst in far-seen Angry Flash and Deafening Roar of far-heard Artillery, or when, with Secret Mysterious Hand, he builds in a Moment on the dark dissolving Bosom of the Rainy Cloud, like a Coloured Scarf cast upon it, the wondrous Arch, fit Ornament for surrounding the Throne itself of God, or when, setting, he lights up a Turbulent Sea of Tossing Cloud with Far-shining Splendour of Fiery Glow: What, I ask, are the Starry Firmament and the Moon and the Sun together apart from MAN, with his Inward Splendours of the Spirit, MAN, but for whom they, and Myriads of Myriads such as they, are of no Value, MAN, but for whom they are as

good as are not, MAN, for whose Potentially-infinite Spirit the Actually-infinite Universe is but a Body, and whose Unrealizable because Infinite Internality of Spirit is a Mate and Match for the Infinite Externality of Nature, MAN, capable of realizing Perfect Union with God by the Uncreated Cross of Christ, in the One Threefold Glory of which only are made fully known Eternal Power and Wisdom and Love, and by which only are to be experienced, in the Secretest Bower of Bliss, the Unutterable Laughters of the Soul : What are they but for him, MAN, with the Temple of the Highest in his Heart (if there too the Strange Place of Graves), MAN, who, on issuing, sooner or later, from the Natural Sphere into which he is born, and living, as, in his Essential Spiritual Nature, he lives now and only and forever, in the Eternal Kingdom of That Which Could Not But Be, projects by necessity, as the Reflection of his Responsibility, a Hell as deep as his Heaven is high, MAN, capable of taking an Earnest Look, as it were over the Brink, into the Fearful Depths and Chasms Far-descending, and a Survey of the Sacred Sublime Heights, of his Own Divine Nature, and of making with all Resolution and Speed for the Heights, of reaching the Heights, and of living forever with God on the Heights : What are they, the Starry Firma-

ment, and the Moon, and the Sun, apart from HIM, this Grand and Glorious Child and Friend and Fellow of the Eternal Spirit? The Moon and the Stars are but higher than the Mud, and the Sun has been crowned but with Glory and Honour above the Clay.



THE GREATNESS OF MAN.

ON reading over what I have written, I am far from feeling satisfied that I have sufficiently well expressed my doctrine on the Philosophy of All Possible Revelation ; yet it is fully and finally established. I shall, however, here make some additional remarks that may not be of no use to some minds earnestly seeking the truth.

The problem of philosophy is, either, *What is the Universe?* or, *How must we think the Universe?* If the former, it presupposes, in looking for an answer, that we are capable of perfect knowledge, though that perfect knowledge may not yet be ours and is yet only an object of search. But if, in regard to any one single question, we have arrived at perfect knowledge, the hope cannot be foolish that, in regard to any other whatsoever, we may one day, soon or late, arrive at perfect knowledge ; and they surely deserve well of mankind who have given their lives to the hitherto baffled pursuit of it—objects they are of reverence and regard, like soldiers

lying dead on the battle-field, who do not march victorious with their comrades into the capital of the conquered enemy; for finders of truth partly owe *their* success too to the baffled seekers. But we *are* capable of knowing perfectly. We have, for instance, an absolutely perfect or infinite knowledge that two and two make and must make four, that, where two things are parallel to a third, they are and must be parallel to each other, that the sum of the angles of a triangle are and must be equal to two right angles; and that throughout the boundless universe these truths hold and rule. We have an absolutely perfect and infinite knowledge that these and other such truths are not true by the command or will of any God whatsoever; and that for any God whatsoever to command two and two to be five would be, only because frightful, not a ridiculous instance of divine lunacy. The God might, were it possible, stamp with rage and hurl his thunderbolts; but impotently; for every two thunderbolts added to two would, in spite of the noise, quietly continue to make *four* thunderbolts, and every two and two stamps would steadily remain *four* stamps. We are, then, capable of perfect or infinite knowledge, so that no God whatsoever could possibly know better than we; and as what, and only what, we know perfectly

or infinitely *must* be known by us, if at all, *infinitely* or *perfectly*, it follows that our second form of the problem of philosophy, *How must we think the Universe?* is virtually the same as our first, *What is the Universe?* For we cannot know what the Universe *is*, except by knowing perfectly that what we think of it is what we *must* think of it, and that necessary thought is perfect and infinite in its nature.

We see with perfect clearness that the Universe possesses a twofold nature: it has Being and Existence. The pen with which I write has existence, and it has force to *exist* among other existing things, but it has no power of *being* whatsoever, for, before I can glance twice at it, it has passed away in a degree that is, in thought, *infinitely* divisible. It has its existence entirely in and by what is not itself. When, therefore, we say *What is*, we refer to that in which all pens, and all things in all worlds, have their changing existence. All that has existence came into existence and passes out of it. But pure unimagined thought possesses changeless *being*. The thought that two and two make four, for instance, is, in itself, perfect and infinite, and is, by its nature, insusceptible of degree, and is unchangeable, and, in every child, equally as in any possible angel or any God, intellectually rules, with perfect and

infinite power, all things changeable throughout the boundless external universe, and all things unchangeable in the spaceless realms within.

Let us pause here for a moment, reader, if you please, and it may, perhaps, be profitable for you and for me, to pause and consider a little, especially if it is, as I believe it is, true, what I have heard or read somewhere, that *The soul-touched man is the true philosopher*. Consider the infinite and unspeakable dignity of every child. I have just been trying to recollect how frequently I have read or heard what seemed to me to approach or reach adequacy regarding that unutterable dignity. I remember but the sayings of three men—and the saying of a Fourth. Lord Moncreiff I think it was who once, in a public speech, while for manhood he claimed respect, and for womanhood reverence, claimed for childhood, as for the most honourable old age, *veneration*. Dr. Stirling, in one of those skeleton-poems so frequently to be found in his prose works, has pictured the awe-struck congregation standing and gazing at the baby at the baptismal font; and it is a picture well worthy of a poet and philosopher's eye. Nor can another truly *see* it before the philosopher and poet has pointed it out. Wordsworth has said, *Heaven lies about us in our infancy*. But there is the saying of a Fourt, of Him who

spake as never another man spake, who remains yet alone in a category by himself high over the heads and still more truly in a deeper deep than the hearts of other men, the Saviour of the World, *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.* Let us now return, refreshed, to our work.

We have so far explained the nature and relation of Existence and Being. We have shown, by our examples, that pure unimagina-
tive thought *is*, and not, like a thing of time, *ex-is*. It is infinite and eternal in its nature, unsusceptible of increase or diminution, possessed of infinite and eternal power, being, though itself destitute of extent, and belonging neither to space nor time, able, even in a little child, equally as in any angel or possible God, to rule perfectly all that extends and changes as well as all that is unchangeable and without extent. What is of pure being, then, is neither young nor old, was not yesterday and will not be to-morrow, is neither of earth nor of sky ; it infinitely and eternally *is*, and, therefore, by its nature, it could not but be.

But it may be asked how the knowledge that two and two make four, if it belongs to pure being, and not to space and time, came to be in

a child who did not know it yesterday. I reply, *first*, that we do not really at bottom know the *how* of any one thing whatsoever, and it is only vague and slovenly thinking that makes people imagine they do; and, *second*, that the questioner errs in his whole mental position and effort. He should try to develop time from eternity and not eternity from time. Whatever evolutions there may have been (and I believe that there never has been anything from unbeginning—and that there never will be anything to unending—time, in the time-world or boundless external universe, but evolution, which I take to be the *rôle* of Existence in the Everlasting Divine Drama), it is as perfectly clear, it is as infinitely certain, as that two and two are four, that all such things as that two and two are four are ETERNALLY INCAPABLE OF EVOLUTION. When we are conscious of the knowledge that two and two are four, *it is already perfect and infinite*; it did not at all *come to be*. What comes, changes and passes: what cannot change and pass cannot come. Of things that come no two are perfectly like (since the causes of each individual thing are necessarily infinite in number and different); of things that cannot change and pass (things purely intellectual), all are absolutely the same in all minds. Things that cannot change and

pass are illustrated by things that change and pass—illustrated to spirits—finite spirits—actually finite, but potentially infinite—from eternity to eternity, by God himself—Imagination mediating between the world of Pure Thought and the world of the Senses. God, not in time, but in the order of thinking, divides himself, in order that he may act—eternally gives opposition to himself and overcomes himself: through this action, spirit is conscious and personal; and every spirit is a form of God, the Absolutely-Unnameable and Infinitely-Infinite Eternal Spirit—neither masculine, nor feminine, nor neuter, nor thought, nor thing—the Unnameable First and Last Intellectual and Moral Energy working from unbegun to endless Time through boundless Space in Spirit and Matter, and in Matter *for* Spirit, since Matter is merely means and commodity, as ground and support for the body and sign for the soul. The reader who would properly understand must consider the nature of language and the necessarily inadequate struggle of pure thought to utter itself in words that never can be perfectly purified from their figurative origin. Everything, then, in the time-world comes to exist and passes away; everything in the world of being eternally is. The time-child, then, who knows to-day and did

not know yesterday, has, so to speak, in realising personality, *come to eternity*, and can now advance more and more into eternity. I have much to say here; but what I have already said is enough for my purpose, since I have shewn with infinite clearness, with absolute certainty, that the worlds of pure being and of existence are *one* in man, that what is infinite and eternal by nature and what is changing and infinite in extent meet in and constitute him; that man is both mind and manifestation.

And as with his mental, so with his moral, being. For will, pure will, likewise, is infinite and eternal in its nature, and is not in space and time, being inextended.

Man, then, is not a creature to whom God *deigns* to do this and *deigns* to do that; one might as well speak of God deigning to be. God is not ratiocinative: a ratiocinative God would, for one thing, be a perfect puzzle to himself. The inevitable outgoings of the divine energy in thought and love (one in Self-consciousness, as light and heat are one in the principle of Fire) form man, an incarnation of God, to stand up, and, by means of Senses and of Fantasy, see, as it were, an image of eternity in space and time, and so to realise in himself the true eternity. To such a being God alone is his own revelation; and how this revelation

is made I have clearly (and, so far as I know, *first*) explained.

And the explanation is a matter of immense importance to every soul of man and to the world. To shew this fully would lead me too far at present ; but as the reader should now perfectly know how it is that "the kingdom of heaven is within," and within only, he should know what ought utterly to destroy in him forever the shallow and vain direction of his imagination to an external paradise,—and even *that* is of immense importance. Not that another state of being is hopeless ; it is nearer certainty than ever. But what we have to do here is only to realise the kingdom of heaven within. Those who have an insufficient sense of this are often led into cant and hypocrisy, and are not ashamed to lift up their voices to God, (who is truth itself) and sing—

What faith rejoices to believe,
We long and pant to see ;
We would be absent from the flesh,
And present, Lord, with thee,

when [they certainly would sing, if they sang the real keenly-felt fact, without lying and hypocrisy—

What faith rejoices to believe,
WE DO NOT WANT TO SEE ;

WE WOULD BE PRESENT WITH THE FLESH,
AND ABSENT, LORD, FROM THEE.

How pleasing to God, the honest God of truth, would this true and honest version be in comparison with the other! Verily, verily, I say unto you, that the singer of the other version HAS his reward.

The unspeakable greatness of man must surely now be perfectly apparent to the most thoughtless reader, and, perhaps, he may now be able to regard a child's baptism with other eyes, and with the awe of which the poet-philosopher spoke. The congregation stand up to pray; and the minister of God, pausing in the midst of his earnest prayer for the baby, baptises, and resumes his earnest prayer for him, having, in that pause of imploring adoration, solemnly received into the bosom of the Christian church, if he will but have the wisdom to claim his birthright, an heir of Heaven. *If!* Ah, in that solemn parenthetic pause of imploring adoration, what thoughts of hope and fear flash through the minds of men! What thoughts of this time-world and its deceits! What thoughts of children that once lay innocent like that baby in their mothers' arms at the baptismal font! But, except for the *fear*, what romance could there be in the *hope*? Lying, then, there, in his mother's arms, in his white baptismal

robe, wrapped, too, in another, a fear-fringed robe of awful hope, him, an incarnation of true eternity, and dividing and uniting in himself the two sense-and-fantasy eternities of flowing time, the father takes and raises to receive the symbol of purifying grace : surely an object, this wonder of wonders, of veneration for the feeling mind, which truly divines the meaning, which easily understands the dialect, to others difficult, of Jesus, when, thinking doubtless of the ideal heights of divine humanity, he said, *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.*



POEMS.

TIME.

TIME is flowing like a river
Onward ever, ever, ever,
Bearing all things in its course;
Nothing can defy its force—
Though in seeming rest for ages:
Not by fits and starts and stages—
Every moment all is flowing,
Rock and vapour ever going.
Not alone the worlds on high
That the telescopes descry,
But all worlds throughout the range
Of endless space forever change,
Borne without a moment's rest
On the river's boundless breast.
To the Future comes the river
Onward ever, ever, ever,
Far beyond conception fast,
Steadily from out the Past,
While (and there is no delusion)

To the Past, without confusion,
 As if from the Future, ever,
 On the one and double river,
 Through the Present, *all* is brought,
 Vanishing more swift than thought.
 Where the channel of the flow?
 Man, wouldst thou thy greatness know?
 In thy Fantasy and Senses
 Only are the mystic tenses:
 Past and Future cannot be
 Saving in thy Fantasy;
 Through its fivefold channel ran,
 Runs, and will run, Time in man.
 But there's something in the soul
 That beholds the river roll,
 God, or God-like, changeless, high,
 Call it what you will, an Eye,
 One with uncreated light,
 One with life, high over height,
 Deep below all depth, that never
 Could belong unto the river,
 And, its consciousness within,
 Now a planet, now a pin,
 Can receive with equal ease—
 Match for anything you please!
 Say that all things only seem;
 Say that all is but a dream:
 Man the Dreamer, what is he?
 Spirit in Eternity.

Nay, he dreams not. To a land
 Coming, left by God's own hand,
 As were all lands, in a mess,
 See confusion less and less !
 When he comes to pitch his camp,
 Flies the pestilential swamp !
 See the wild beast and the weed
 Yield before the plough and seed !
 What was God's work worth till man
 Came with thoughtful brow and plan ?
 Was it not a wild and vain
 Dream as of a frenzied brain ?
 Look upon it now, and, see—
 'Tis a fair Reality,
 Stamped with thought, man's mighty mark :
 See the corn-field, garden, park !
 See the smiling cottage-homes ;
 Villages ; and cities ; domes
 Rearing high to God—for where
 Man exists, there's worship there.
 See the monuments of men
 Who have risen now and then,
 Leaders born to bless their kind
 In the onward march of mind,
 Helpers of the head and heart,
 Great in Science or in Art,
 Leaders in the Holy Life,
 Great in any noble strife !
 Onward man against his foes

Conquering and to conquer goes,
 Glorifying in his ways sublime.
 Is he not the lord of Time?
 Spirit, he! and all those bright
 Worlds on worlds that shine by night,
 On and on through boundless space—
 Homes for many another race—
 Nay, in number infinite,
 The races of the sons of light
 Needs must fill Infinity—
 But for man, and such as he,
 What were *all* those worlds together?
 Heaps of shining dirt, my Brother!
 Shining, but with vague sensation,
 In the animal creation,
 Which behold, with unknown eye,
 Unknown things, and gaze and die.
 Ah, then! know thyself; and know
 Thy own greatness here below.
 Hast thou not a glorious home,
 Flower-floored, with starry dome?
 If thou know'st thy work, begin—
 Make thy nature shine within.
 It is something great indeed
 To compel the soil and weed
 Till a glorious harvest stand
 All throughout the smiling land,
 Safe through seas all storms to brave
 (Roaring wars of wind and wave),

Gulfs to bridge, and hills to bind,
 Through the ocean flash the mind,
 Neighbouring oceans—by thy might
 Mountains moving—to unite,
 Or, for Ceres' golden grain,
 Tearing fields from Neptune's reign,
 With a diamond-saw to mock
 Resistance of the mountain-rock,
 Hewing on for mile and mile
 Till through darkness daylight smile,
 Nor the mountain interpose
 Between the friends it once made foes,
 In the mine the coal to hew,
 Light of ancient suns renew,—
 Bright Apollo's golden hair,
 Crystallized for ages there,
 In the sunny grate unbound,
 Flowing all the hearth around,
 Though the blasts the windows beat,
 Throwing out a genial heat,
 And the merry human ring,
 Careless of the winter, sing,
 Beaming wit or wisdom flies,
 All Apollo in the eyes,—
 And from forge and furnace, too,
 Wherewith Nature to subdue,
 Furnishing the mighty tool—
 These are great things ; but the School
 And the Church surpass them far

And man's greatest glories are.
 When upon the zephyr swells
 Sweet the sound of Sabbath bells,
 Two great sights there are, and may
 Scotland see them both for aye !
 For, on her great cities' streets,
 Human river river meets,
 Flowing, each a mighty tide,
 This and that way, side by side,—
 Fifty fourfold rivers flow,—
 To the house of God they go,
 Meet in holy high communion,
 Meditate divinest union,
 Till, when they in song have striven,
 Yet can scarce attain to Heaven,
 Heaven—for man had heavenly birth—
 Heaven bends down and kisses Earth !—
 Poor, compared with holy joys,
 Pleasure in the comic toys
 Of the light and strutting stage
 That the Frenchman's heart engage !—
 Long, FOREVER, Scotland ! may
 Thou, on that thy Sabbath-day,
 See this other glorious sight—
 True source of a nation's might—
 See thy earnest peasants still,
 Round the wood, and o'er the hill,
 By the burn, and far across
 Toilsome moor and treacherous moss,

Up and down the stiffest brae,
 In the valley far away,
 Through the field, along the road,
 Flock to fill the house of God—
 Men who live beneath the weight
 Of thoughts, though few, that make them great:
 The thought that they are born to die ;
 The thought of God's all-seeing eye ;
 Recording conscience ; life's probation ;
 The fear of final condemnation ;
 The thought that life will soon be done,
 And Heaven forever lost or won.
 Oh, great is MAN'S MYSTERIOUS HEART !
 Lo, yonder ! in the humble cart,
 Propped up on straw, the ancient Sire
 Beholds with joy the approaching spire,
 Whose shadow, thrown by sun and moon,
 Shall rest upon his grave so soon ;
 But not that he expects to hear
 A word that may allay his fear,
 For even now he lives above,
 Since that his very heart is love,
 And full of God, and brimming o'er
 With bliss, at times too full for more :
 For this is one who in his prime
 Saw through and through the cheats of Time,
 And striking in with all his might
 For life, and things beyond his sight,
 At last he conquered God in prayer,

And breathed, within, a heavenly air,
And ever breathed, until he, too,
Within, a sky of bluer blue,
Serener, higher, saw, and heard
The sound sometimes as of a word,
The wafting too as of a wing;
A sense of coming, vanishing,
About him, of sweet presences,
And beings gracious, oft was his;
Sometimes he saw such landscapes rise
As if he were in Paradise,
Such azure hills, such woods and streams
As others never saw in dreams,
As never, at night's wizard noon,
Beneath a solemn summer moon,
Whose spiritualizing power
Rules with high hand the heart and hour,
The love-struck boy, with glamoured eyes,
For love transfigures earth and skies,
Beholds, when he the casement opes,
And, filled with wishes more than hopes,
Looks far across the vale to where
Lies lapped in love and sleep the Fair,
And tender fancy, by love's law,
Can see, with sweet voluptuous awe,
Where on the pillow lies her head,
Her locks, escaped her cap, disspread,
Or flow, meandering gold, until
They reach, below her chin, the frill

Of her white shift, can see her brow
So calm—as of an angel—now,
Her eyelids' fringes softly lie,
Her dream-flushed cheeks with roses vie,
The ruby gates of breath—the pearl,
And all the sweetness of the girl,
Till reverence gives the needful check,
And pulls the reins on fancy's neck—
No! never he, when with delight
He breathes his soul into the night—
Breathes out, like some sweet-scented flower,
When Nature, with creative power,
To glorify the time of love,
Hangs round the plant, and out above,
A mass of bloom, of various hue,
Deep-red, snow-white, and brightest blue,
And veils in bloom the urgent seed
Of every meanest wayside weed—
No! never he, the generous boy,
At height of his uneasy joy,
Beholds, transformed to fairy-land,
As if by wave of magic-wand,
Celestialized by love's own light,
That moonlight-flooded vale, so bright
As many a glorious inward scene
This peasant mystic saw, serene
Beyond what earth may shew, and still
They came and went without his will,
Allied to feelings pure somehow :

The peace of heaven came on his brow ;
 Yea, he so led the life divine,
 His face at last began to shine ;
 For, living deeply day by day,
 The old traditions fell away—
 The petty doctrines made by men
 Of things beyond all human ken—
 He corked the bottle of the creed,
 And realized, by love and deed,
 The truths of life, himself denied,
 And, ever living, daily died,
 And, realizing God within,
 He found all selfishness was sin,
 Till, Spirit-led, he came to this—
 Unmasterheelfollowatliness :
 But, fettered by the winter fire
 For many months, this ancient Sire—
 From whom, in vigorous earlier days,
 God never wanted public praise,
 Though in the storm the church-bell rung
 And far upon the blast was flung
 The stifled sound—is glad to-day,
 This sweet and zephyry morn of May,
 To have his old adoring heart
 Borne churchward, grateful, in the cart,
 For, though his voice now sadly fails,
 The heart, and but the heart, avails :
 And when he totters down the aisle,
 A hush is in the church the while ;

All eyes pursue him till his feet
 Beside the pulpit reach his seat;
 A reverence to him is given
 As if he had one foot in Heaven;
 All feel, whoe'er may speak the prayer,
 Him leader of the worship there;
 And when they see him lean to hear,
 One skinny hand curled round his ear,
 When, with severity of grace,
 He half turns round his sculptured face,
 And o'er the collar of his coat,
 His few locks, straggling, snow-white, float,
 They feel a something high, sublime,
 As if they saw the work of Time
 For once accomplished.

In the soul,
 Ay, somewhat sees the river roll,
 God, or God-like, changeless, high,
 And the HEART shall never die!
 While, forever and forever,
 Time flows on, a boundless river,
 With its three so mystic tenses,
 Through the Fantasy and Senses.

THE POWER OF POESY.

I HAVE often wished that I could sing a Song,
 But not for that it would my fame prolong
 Among mankind, though, 'sooth, that too were
 sweet,

For no one loves to think, when this so fleet
 Life on the kind green earth has rung away,
 No echo for the sound should plead delay
 (And who thus loved to think, his soul were
 low

And near the clod, a slave and only so);
 But chiefly I would sing, I who have still
 Held up from youth the mirror of good-will
 Before the face of every fellow-creature
 And joyed to see therein a lovely feature
 And grieved for much unlovely, that, when I
 Am mouldering in the dust and silent lie,
 The pressed strength of my soul, preserved in
 verse,

Imperishable wine, should that blest curse
 Of labour with its sweetness, ease, and cheer,
 And soften grief to a relieving tear,

And calm the mind perturbed, and elevate
The aspiring soul to Heaven, and rouse, elate,
Man's yet unfolded powers, to unmake the old
And make new Gods and laws: a Hope too
bold,

But a kind wish. Who, dead, thus nobly sings,
Lives still, nay reigns. The Word is King of
Things.

THE MYSTIC MIRROR.

I HAVE a mystic mirror,
My innermost soul's delight,
And often I gaze in this mirror
By day, and often by night.
But no one has seen me gazing
Of all whom in it I see,
Though, save therein, a human face
Has never been seen by me.

The greatest of titles of honour
Would be but a foolish toy
Compared with this mystic mirror,
My glory and my joy.
And what were all power or riches,
Bereft of this strange bright thing,
Wherein I see with equal eye
Beggar alike and king ?

Every glimpse in my mystic mirror
Causes me joy and pain,
For I look in this mirror with longing
For all men's good and gain.

In this mirror my own reflection
Prompts ever a prayer like this :
God pardon my best perfection
And forgive my holiness.

Would that all men had this mirror,
As they might well possess,
As all men have all of the sunlight,
While I have none the less.
But at a breath of hatred,
Or the least light love of ill,
Would vanish that magic mystic
Mirror of pure good-will.

ADDRESS TO SATAN.

SATAN, cocksure to prevail,
Lift your horns, and wag your tail !
—No, no, Satan ; no—no—no !
Why to *me* a mortal foe ?
Did I ever wish you ill ?
Would you were in Heaven still !
Would that you were back to Heaven,
Broken-hearted, kissed, forgiven !
Oh, believe in God's great heart !
Satan has a share and part
Always if he once had one
In the love that ne'er began.
There, if theologians please,
Christ read, " Love your enemies " .
Not to Moses or Hosea—
To the central Pure Idea,
Leaving Moses' ancient pages,
Worn-out in the course of ages,
Came that strange young Jew sublime,
Gazing till he saw through Time,

Till he was no more aware
 That even Space itself was there,
 And what Hosea had not strength
 Of eye to see, *he* read at length ;
 And in the Pure Idea saw
 That law was love, and love was law ;
 And turning back to those who stood
 By Moses for their final good,
 Said, " He's in error who supposes
 I came to give a blow to Moses,
 For not a hair-stroke of a *t*
 Of Moses but fulfilled shall be ;
 Who said to you, ' Thou shalt not kill,'
 But left the hatred in you still ;
 But this is what is said by me—
 That thou shouldst love thine enemy".
 —Once, when Christ said, " Get behind,"
 Pride and hatred made you blind,
 Satan, that you could not see
 It had fain been " Follow me".
 Now again, sent from above,
 You shall hear the voice of love.
 Love begets love. I love you, I ;
 Then, Satan, love ; begin and try.
 Love *me*, Satan, and the race
 Your new heart will soon embrace ;
 Trust me, if you once begin,
 Love shall make an end of sin :
 The light of love, the love of light,

Shall break through Hell's thick murky night.
—Satan, Satan, weep and wail,
Droop your head, and hide your tail,
Or with the tassel at the end
Wipe the tears that fast descend !
But of *this* be very sure,
While the ages shall endure,
That, until the grace be lent
To your heart that it repent,
Mercy's self will pass by Hell,
Glance through tears, yet say, " 'Tis well ".

IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

I STOOD by the side of his bed,
 And gazed at his white old head,
 At the withered old sinner asleep.
 What is he dreaming now ?
 For something he dreams ; for his brow
 Is changed, and he mutters deep.

Through his toothless gums
 Indistinctly comes
 A sound. These the words that he uttered :
 "I will tell the truth, mother ;
 It wasn't my brother
 That did it, but me." So he muttered.

Then a wintry smile
 For a little while
 Seemed to struggle for birth at his lips,
 But it died away
 Like the moon's faint ray
 In the hour when she suffers eclipse.

Once tender and true,
He was dreaming, I knew,
Of a time gone seventy years,
When his soul was white,
And his conscience light,
And the least reproach brought tears.

And when he woke,
It was thus he spoke :
"I was dreaming of early days,
And I saw so clear
My mother here,
And she clapped me and gave me praise.

"I have not lived well ;
My heart is a hell ;
And the past is the future for me.
If the spirit remain,
I go to sustain
The rebuke of eternity."

ON THE BACK OF THE HILL

My youth fled away,
I begin to be gray.
Through the gates of old age, down yonder, I see
A road stretching dim,
Where, with tottering limb,
A few frail forms drag on wearily.

Where the road in thick gloom
Seems to end, is the Tomb.
That thick gloom is this wide world's wall;
And some say that hither
We came from nowhither,
And beyond there is nowhere at all.

But others again,
With not less weight of brain,
And with hearts at the least quite as great,
Living lives true and high
In the spirit, deny
They are playthings of meaningless fate.

"There's a godlike doom
 Of eternal gloom
 Or ineffable light, when man's marches
 And battles are o'er,
 And Time rolls no more
 Through its mystical bridge of five arches."

So they think ; and with fear
 And with hope they draw near
 Where the riddle of ages is read,
 Where the secret sublime
 Hid from sages of time
 Is discovered and kept by the Dead.

—If there be, as they say,
 That terrible Day,
 And my soul of all hope were bereft,
 God grant me the grace
 To see one dear face
 When I look to the Right from the Left.

And, shining there,
 The fair with the fair,
 God grant she may not see me,
 For she was so true
 That the sight would undo
 Her bliss through eternity.

—What a creature were man,
 With his life of a span,

On the breath of his nostrils depending,
 If, sprung from the clod,
 To the friendship of God
 He aspired in a life never-ending !

No ! the body of earth
 He appears with at birth,
 Though alive, is a vesture, no more,
 And his innermost Me
 Is a spirit and free
 When he lays down the clay that he wore.

Yet, if Love and if Thought
 In the body were wrought
 To depend on the life of this form,
 Man still to me
 Would seem to be
 A divine and a glorious worm.

Oh ! it is not for sport
 That Conscience holds court,
 Nor for nothing that Will has his throne,
 Nor that Reason can see
 What could not but be,
 As if one with the thing that is known.

My articulated creed
 Is a short one indeed,

For this article only hold I:

The keenest you scan,

You find something in man

Indefeasibly highest of high.

Through its deeps without bound,

Though Being all round

Were searched and forever, what stuff

Of a nobler kind

Were there ever to find,

Created or no?—But enough!—

Then, over each ear,

Though at last there appear

One or two little fringes of frost,

Things that love and that know

May smile at the snow

And the winter. They cannot be lost.

Yet if, ceasing to think,

My soul should sink

And die in Death's dark river,

I never shall know

That it has been so,

That I am not alive and forever.

But let be what there will,

Down the back of the hill

As I move, I delightedly ponder,
And with heart sound and brave
I can go to the grave
Through the gates of old age, down yonder.

THE MEANING OF MAN.

OLD age is a burden to bear
 To the doors of death and the tomb,
And babyhood, too, has its own good share
Of pain, for its strength, though free from care,
 From the gate of life and the womb.

But manhood is strong in the midst of the way
 That leads from the womb to the tomb,
And would need to be, too, for the heat of the
 day,
And the long race to run ere evening gray
 Brings the night of the grave's grim gloom.

But what is the meaning of man, can you tell,
 From the hour that he opens the womb?
Is the great grand issue fair or fell?
Is there hope of Heaven, or fear of Hell,
 When over him closes the tomb?

Oh, what shall we say of the saint's strong trust,
 And the hopes that so gloriously loom
Of the vision of God and the perfected just?
Is the soul a result of organised dust,
 And unworthy so noble a doom?

The answer is silence! But here, and for me,
On my way from the womb to the tomb,
One thing I resolve, and that is to be free,
And rejoice as I can in the best light I see,
Till I enter the grave's grim gloom.

And there I shall find—what there is to be
found,
What our fathers have found in the tomb,
That the sleep there has dreams, or is dream-
lessly sound,
Such as no trumpet ever can break underground,
And that dust is our endless doom.

PARTING.

IF parting we part not
 To meet again THERE,
 Then all that is
 Is a poor affair.
 Let me not fear,
 But know for fact,
 That thinking itself
 Is a physical act ;
 That, after its glimmer
 In darkness and doubt,
 Like the light of a candle
 The soul goes out ;
 That man's but immortal
 By succession, like flies,
 And men die forever,
 Though man never dies—
 Let me but know it,
 And give me then
 A cup of poison,
 And—*Good-bye, men!*
 For if parting we part not
 To meet again THERE,
 Then ALL THAT IS
 IS A POOR AFFAIR.

WESLEY'S WORMS.*

"I AM a worm and no man!" cried
 That ancient bard, who knew
 Man's greatness, when he felt that he
 Himself had done unworthily
 Of manhood, called as man to be
 Good, beautiful, and true,
 In every thought, and word, and deed,
 And God-ward soar forever, freed
 From earth's mean contradictions.

"What worms are men!" the Wesleyan sings,
 And "Oh! what grace to worms!"
 And fancies this is praising God!
 Who, says the Wesleyan, with a *nod*
 Made all the worlds (—a rather odd
 And easy way for forms
 So vast and numberless), and Man,
 The little worm, His works to scan—
 All out of good old NOTHING.

* See Appendix, Note V.

NOTHING had always been with God
 From all eternity,
 And nothing else, and that was why
 He, looking out for NOTHING's eye,
 Only blank nothing could descry,
 But nodded, meaning, Be.
 NOTHING saw nothing, yet that hour,
 Obedient to Almighty Power,
 Flew into worlds substantial.

The Wesleyan noddle, nodding so,
 Has dreamed its foolish dream,
 Worthy of worms!—But some appear
 To think that NOTHING had an *ear*,
 Which God spake into, and made hear;—
 But all agree, I deem,
 That NOTHING did not say, "I won't,"
 Nor God, "I'll damn you if you don't"—
 Thus terrifying nothing.

Some fancy that God's *will* alone
 Was equal to the thing—
 That, somehow, NOTHING found it out,
 And was extremely put about,
 But must obey, if even from gout
 It had been suffering
 Worse than ten Dukes!—I think the word,
 Or nod, is quite enough absurd,
 Without the will and NOTHING.

I dare to say God's word and will
 Were weak as were his hand,
 Dealing with nothing; weak as mine;
 And that this UNIVERSE DIVINE
 Is somehow God—my God and thine—
 If thou wilt understand—
 Forever!—Never came to be,
 But, being, comes eternally
 In Power, and Love, and Wisdom.

“Worms!” What is large may not be great,
 And what is smallest may.
 What matter though I were so tall
 As reach the moon, and like a ball
 Seize it, and toss it through the All
 Millions of miles away,
 With instinct only, far from God—
 Or bored, my home a little clod,
 If there I knew and loved Him?

Man's greatness comes not from his height—
 Nor weight avoirdupois—
 But from his God-like love and thought,
 That knows and loves what God has wrought;
 And *this*—that he has never brought
 His life to greatest joys
 Save through self-sacrificing deed—
 Creative work his chiefest need,
 A God-like high employment.

THE BOY FROM THE LAND OF
NOTHING.

HE came from the land of Nothing
 All the way to see his mother,
 And his father, and his brother,
 And his sister, and another
 (But he has not seen *her* yet,
 And expresses no regret)—
 His wife.
 What life !
 Oh, the rogue ! look, how he smiles !
 And his mother's heart beguiles
 Night and morrow
 Of her sorrow.
 For she knew by telegram,
 Seven months since, the little lamb
 Had adventured, all alone,
 On the voyage, two months gone,
 And her thoughts, a mother's own,
 Night by night,
 Day by day,
 Were not light,
 You may say !

And much commerce with the sky
 Had her heart, I'll wager, ay !
 Night and morning, rising high,
 Seeking unseen sympathy,

Not without the need just then !

Best of husbands are but men.

It is only God and mothers who know all ;
 It is only God and mothers who know
 much.

Is a mother no relation to her child,
 then ? * Who is such

A near one ? You may call

The mother what you will :

Is not she the *mother* still ?

And who more glad than she,

I should like to know, to see

The boy from the land of Nothing ?

* See Appendix, Note VI.

THE SOLIDARITY OF THE RACE.

THROUGH Heaven there went a wailing,
 And cries of bitter anguish,
 As if some heart were torn.
 The tempest of God's praises
 Rose, blast on blast of blessing,
 From blessed tuneful voices.

 "I wiss I had never been born,"
 Was heard amid the pauses
 In Aberdeenshire English,
 "*My* laddie is nae here.
 I've lookit an' canna see him.
 He was a richt kin' laddie,
 An' guede to me, jist byous.

 He's gane to Hell, I fear:
 He'd some vrang wyes of thinkin'."
 —The voice a loving mother's.

 Her mother heard her grieve,
 And wept, and then *her* mother,
 And hers again, another,
 Another, and another,

 So back and back to Eve;
 And all the female voices
 Throughout all Heaven went wailing.

The men kept up the tune,
Singing "Holy, holy, holy,"
But vexed to see the women,
Given over to their feelings,

Forget themselves so soon.
Christ sees his mother weeping,
And from his eyes the water

Of pity soon appears ;
He sobs to hear the children,
Who join their wailing mothers :
No man can stand it longer—

God's praise is drowned in tears.

HOME.

LOST is the self-seeking soul,
And farther and farther she strays,
While herself is the aim and the goal
Of all her endeavours and ways :
False lights lead her far from the path
That the seekers of true good have trod
When they found (—as each true seeker hath,
Or will—) all their true good in God.

Astray on the wilds of self-will,
In the mists of her own thoughts to roam,
False confidence guides her, until
She seems hopelessly far from her home,
And arrived at her unblessed goal,
And forlorn in the night of despair ;
For God is the home of the soul—
Faith and true light alone lead you there.

THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD.

WAIT on the Spirit.
Disdain to use
One word not given
By this only muse.
The words of the Spirit
Are living words,
And sweet and refreshing
As songs of birds,
And as natural too.
Leaping forth from the heart
(Or God knows where)
They come, and the art
Of the Spirit's chosen
Is to refuse
What his keen ear
Knows as not from the muse.
For his sure ear,
Prepared and purged,
Rejects the claim,
Though cunningly urged,
Of words that are not,
Through and through,

One with the Spirit,
 Alive and true.
 Wait on the Spirit,
 Night and day ;
 Wait on the Spirit,
 Wait, I say.

Wait on the Spirit.
 A raw school-boy
 Might search for the Spirit
 In words with joy ;
 And laugh to find it
 Waiting the bard—
 Soft in *soft*,
 And hard in *hard* ;
 Smashing in *smash*,
 Smooth in *smooth*,
 Crashing in *crash*,
 Soothing in *soothe*,
 Sinking in *low*,
 Rising in *high* ;
 And at last,
 In the personal pronoun *I*,
 Spirit is mystical,
 Conscious and free,
 As one with itself
 As one can be,

Living in and in,
 On its infinite throne,
 Coming out and out
 Into Nature, its own,
 To conquer the wild,
 The waste, and vain,
 Till all is put under
 Its gracious reign.
Io's divided ;
 Je hops away ;
Ich trudges onward
 Slowly in clay ;
 But one, majestic,
 Perfectly free,
 Mysterious, mighty,
 The word must be,—
 And tender as terrible,—
 Sounding as through
 Matter that Spirit
 Has known to subdue,—
 The word that can utter
 The innermost in,
 To its outermost out,
 Of the world within.
 The Spirit gave England
 This wonderful word,
 To conquer for ever
 With thought as with sword,

Truth and freedom to spread,
That never can die
In the hearts of the sons
Of the land that says *I*.
Wait on the Spirit,
Night and day ;
Wait on the Spirit
Wait, I say.

THE DYING CHRISTIAN TO HIS
DAUGHTER.

My fight is done now—
I think I've won—
But lost or won now,
My fight is *done*!—
Though it oft seemed tough
And too hard to be,
One long chain of close-linked love
It seems now to me.
And on that dread brink
Where now I stand,
I do not shrink—
I'm in God's great hand!
I hear His call,
And—not in blindness—
I can leave ye all
To His loving kindness.
I have watched His ways
For a long time now,
With a heart of praise—
For, I scarce know how,
A *meaning* grew
From the dark and strange;

And though some things, too,
Were beyond my range—
More God-like so !
If no meaning grew,
And I could not know,
I knew He knew.
From afar His love and power,
As faith gave warning,
At the dreary midnight hour
Prepared the morning.
When all seems thick dark night,
Or only dim,
With your whole soul's might, Maggie,
Cleave to Him.

RECONCILIATION.

THERE is love at the heart of the universe, friend,
 Or something not less, without name ;
 And *that* in the soul that death cannot end
 When dissolving this wonderful frame ;
 And a smile to the saint in the rapture of prayer
 On God's face—a foretaste of Heaven,
 That would rescue a soul from its hell of despair
 Though its sins were as seventy times seven.
 In this strange little sin-stricken planet there are
 Many souls that are plodding their way
 With shame and with hope to their Father afar—
 The husks of the swine thrown away.
 No one can wound like the dearest ; but when
 There returns from the hell of division,
 To the arms of the injured, the loved one again,
 The bless of them both is Elysian.
 Cold correctness of conduct may possibly meet
 With the measured approval of Heaven,
 But glorious songs of the angels greet
 The ear of repentance forgiven.
 And full of the Father's forgiveness sublime,
 In the midst of its feasting divine,

It shall gratefully sing, when it thinks of the
time

When it foolishly fed with the swine:

“Though covered with ashes of vice all the night,

A seed of most virtuous fire

Will awake at God’s breath, and spring up, and
grow bright,

A flower for all men’s desire.

Great is His kindness and mercy. Oh bliss!

Let Time and Eternity sing

The running to meet, the embrace, and the kiss,

And the feast, and the robe and the ring.”

RENUNCIATION.

THE way of that strange being, Man,
 Is dark and hither-thither ;
 Sad tragic creature ! From the womb
 He comes, and looks, and through the tomb
 Goes puzzled back—from gloom to gloom !—
 For whence, and why, and whither,
 He knows not ;—and so near to light
 That might be his, more and more bright,
 In self-renunciation !

When, for the soul's material mate,
 Man, mad, degrades the soul,
 A darkened being, his wild way
 He wanders, devious, far astray,
 And sees no glimpse of light that may
 Lead him to his true goal ;
 The soiled, insulted, saddened guest,
 Denied its life divine, no rest
 Can ever have within him.

But when, by some mysterious grace,
 The wisdom and the strength

Are given him, rightly to deny
His lower self, and, living high
In soul and spirit, daily die,
 A light springs up at length,
With manly joys of abstinence,
And vital peace—a growing sense
 Of Heaven within beginning.

CHRIST'S REVENGE.

O LITTLE man ! O man the great !
 As thou alone hast love,
 And thou alone self-conscious thought,
 The whole creation is as nought
 Before one child. All God has wrought—
 Yon starry heavens above,
 When I consider, what are *they* !
 No sun nor star can think and say,
 “From God I get my splendour”.

Were but thy life a life on earth,
 Thou only God-like thing,
 And that one life one hour, yet, oh !
 The heart to love and mind to know
 Would sink yon starry round below
 Thy feet, and even bring
 Its worth, all worthless if no eye
 Intelligent beheld the sky
 And saw to God beyond it.

Oh, when through all eternity
 Man's vast hopes proudly reach,
 'Twere not to know God's laws aright,

To fancy pure and heavenly light
Upon the spirit's natal night
 Could pour and make a breach,
While, in the dark, the glorious power,
Degraded, served the passing hour,
 Enslaved, and all contented.

But souls enslaved, for Christ's revenge
 Long vaguely, in their chains,
Till, roused at length, they fiercely cry
Of their oppressor, *Crucify*,
And on the spirit's Calvary
 The flesh expires in pains,
With *It is finished*—while a light
Shines suddenly, eternal, bright,
 About that crucifixion.

ADDRESS TO A PROCRASTINATING SPIRIT.

LIVE!—and Now!—No more To-morrow!—
This is yesterday's to-morrow,
 Soon to-morrow's yesterday!
 Will you of your life be cheated,
 Trifling hour by hour away,
 Earning for the future sorrow?
 Use the moments as they fly!
 But a moment still repeated,
 What is even Eternity?

Live!—and Now!—No more To-morrow!—
 Man to-day lives, dies to-morrow;
 Life itself is but a day.
 Will you spend your life in sleeping,
 Or in work to last for aye?
 Night comes, and the Long To-morrow!
 Night for sleep! Work out your plan;
 Sow for the Long To-morrow's reaping,
 Live your day, and die a Man.

HOPE AND REALISATION.

MEN's young high hopes deceitful are,
And vain their visions of the things to be,
By fond fancy framed, fair afar,
Fairer than men's eyes on earth may see.

But if thou wilt live beneath the spirit's reign,
And renounce in thee the empire of self-will,
Thou wilt gladly think thy youthful visions vain,
For the best reality is better still.

LOVE AND GOD.

AFTER love, God, nothing more !
The heart must be empty and sore
That knows not then to adore.
Having loved with a love that transcended
The power of all change, it has—*ended* !
But now you are not as before
You learned to know love's sweetest lore.
Fame, pleasure, business, all blended,
Are powerless that bliss to restore
To the mystical deeps of the breast,
The late haunts of peace and of rest,
The home of sweet love, where despair
Will make his abode now, or there
What is better than love, and the Best,
For whom all the loves but prepare.

FINE TALK.

FINE talk !

A tongue-woven web of wind !—

“*Beats all ?*”—I care not what it beats !—

Those mountebank surprising feats,

Rope-dancing of the mind—

Well, see them *once*; but more, what good?

Are blown soap-bubble-novels food ?

There is more substance in one rude

Old proverb, you will find,

Than in some famed three-volume Tales,

Dreams dreamt by rule.

Fine talk !

But give me men who *do* ;

Whose being deep in God has root,

And year by year bears silent fruit ;

Whose thoughts are things that grew,

And ripened slowly; and whose speech,

One with the thing that they would teach,

Far-drawn, and therefore of far reach,

Is what it sounds and true—

Winged spirit, on its way from God,

And no fine talk.

THE BLACK CUCKOO.*

In the early spring we pause to hear
 The new-come voice in the wood;
 But the black cuckoo sings all the year,
 "Be good, be good, be good".

And people crowd to hear the song:
 "You should always do what you should.
 It is good to be good; it is wrong to do wrong:
 Be good, be good, be good."

A simple song has the grey cuckoo,
 "Cuckoo, cuckoo," in the wood,
 And the song of the black is as simple too,
 "Be good, be good, be good".

"Cuckoo, cuckoo!"—"Do wrong, and you'll
 rue!"—
 "Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo!"—
 "Be good, and be blest!"—"Cuckoo, cuckoo!"—
 "Be goo', be goo', be goo'!"

* See Appendix, Note VII.

THE WORKING-BEE TO THE DRONE.

I, THE brisk bee of the morning,
 Am up among the flowers
 With earliest day ;
 Somnolent sinner, you snore away
 The sweetest hours.

My way I am merrily winging
 To the fields of Greece and Rome,
 Where I lie in the fairest flowers and suck,
 Till, filled and laden, glad of my luck,
 I come humming home ;—

And a wealth of wax and of honey,
 Strength and sweetness, my own,
 Won by my labour from busy dawn,
 I have stored, ere you stretch and rise, and
 yawn,
 You drowsy drone.

Were your loss but the loss of the morning !
This is added to what I have won,
 That I go to my future labours hence,
 And work with the strength that is drawn
 from a sense
 Of something done.

LITLANS' PLAYS.

(FROM HEINE.)

LITLAN, *we eence war litlans,*
 Twa litlanies, frolic at play ;
 We crap awa intil the henhouse,
 An' hidit aneth the strae.

Fanever we h'ard a fit passin',
 We craw't, an' the best we cud craw,
 And fowk thocht it wis the cock crawin'
 His *Cockalaleeralalaw*.

A kistie oot-bye in a corner
 We carpetit unca spruce,
 An' gaed intil't thegeether, and bade in't,
 An' mackit a capital hoose.

Woor neepor's aul' cheetie-pussie
 Cam aft as a freen comes to see ;
 We mackit her boos an' curchies,
 An' mony a cumpliment tee.

We anxious-like spiert, "Foo's a' wi' ye?"

Kin'ly list'nin' for answer to that.

(We've spiert sinsyne the same queiston

At mony anither aul' cat.)

We aften tee sat as aul-faurant

As aul' fowk, an' spak wi' their tongue,

Cumpleenin' that a' had been better

Langsyne, fan we carles war young.

That the aul'-fashion't wyes had been follow't

By fashions that warna to reese,

And that things war sae feerious dear noo,

And fowk war sae scarce o' bawbees.

They're gane by, plays an' playocks an' play-
time,

An' a' weers awa' an' gyangs by'—

The times, wordle's gear, an' the wordle,

The aefaul' an' aul'-fashion't wye.

THE WEDDING AT CANA.

THE God of glory, who o'er all
 Height high was ever throned,
 Saw where we on this little ball
 Of earth in misery groaned :
 Say none—God cannot this, that can ;
 He found mysterious way
 To dwell among us as a man,
 And wore our humble clay.
 To spend some happy festive hours
 And see a pair made one,
 He went who once in Eden's bowers
 We pairing bless began ;
 And when material means of mirth
 Had failed the merry core,
 The unknown Lord of Heaven and Earth
 Most kindly gave them more ;
 And, first of all his miracles,
 Turned water into wine.
 The governor a bumper fills,
 And tastes, and cries " Divine !"
 He knew not whence, but *what* it was
 Know perfectly did he,

And, rallying the bridegroom, as
 The wine a brightening glee
 Began to work in soul and eyes,
 “ When men have had enough,
 The usual thing is then,” he cries,
 “ To bring inferior stuff,—
 Folks hardly know, half-drunk with good,
 That they imbibe the bad :
You keep, as honest fellows should,
 The best till last, my lad !—
 This is the thing !—I’ll warrant *this*
 Miraculously fine !
 Fill, friends, again, and let us kiss
 This sweet child of the vine ! ”
 —This first of signs that Jesus made
 Was made in Galilee.
 His glory brightly he displayed,
 And filled the feast with glee.
 Shame on the hearts that have not turned
 And owned him for their Lord,
 If cold converted water burned
 At heart to hear his word !

CARLYLE.

I HEARD, in a dream, like a Giant
In one of the fearfullest rages,
And ran to see what it could be—
It was Carlyle scolding these ages.

He glared, and stamped, and foamed, and ramped,
One of the wildest of sages,
And he was, for a sign, like his Windlestraw,
As he tore with his tongue these ages.

“Keep on your garments,” the Critics cried,
“These ages are very good ages,
With free-trade, and railway, and telegraph ;
They are out of place, these rages.”

But it was of the naked and hungry Soul,
Not of men's material wages,
That Carlyle thought as he fiercely smote
The errors of these last ages.

CARLYLE'S CURE.

THE World was sick and very sick,
 And oh ! but she was bad :
 Her pulse was sometimes slow and weak,
 And sometimes went like mad.
 Great doctors came from far and near,
 Self-summoned to the case,
 Whom healing instinct brought, and fear
 For the whole human race.
 There Carlyle came, a glorious youth,
 Soul-lit by central fire,
 Whose thoughts were, "*Let us first have TRUTH,*
Then of grace what you desire.—
If you would heal the World without,
Begin the work within.—
'Tis action only cures of Doubt.—
 WHEN *will you cease from sin ?*"—
 As when an eagle on his prey
 Comes sweeping downward souse,
 Or as when Cromwell on that day
 With high hand cleared the House,
 Or like the rough-tongued Baptist, when
 He saw the viper brood

Where others saw good formal men,
 In Jordan where he stood,
 And gave them such a washing ere
 They reached the water ; so
 Came Carlyle to the sick-room there,
 To Surplice, Cant, & Co.,
 The lady's doctors. "Stand aside,"
 They said ; "what do you want ?"—
 "*No Surplice at Allhallowtide,*
 Nor damned putrescent Cant,"
 Cried Carlyle ; kicked them from the bed,
 And eke their noses wrung ;
 Then turned him to the sick, and said,
 "*My lass, let's see your tongue*".
 The World had ate of worn-out creed
 And brought on revolutions,
 Enough to greatly hurt indeed
 The best of constitutions.
 "*Purging and Truth will bring you round,*"
 Said then the godlike youth ;
 "*That damned trash has your bowels bound,*
 But purge, and then eat TRUTH."

THE CITY OF THE SOUL.

WHEN first I came to know this,
 That human love decays,
 And vain its vaunt, *eternal*,—
 A thing of years and days!—
 That soul from soul may sever,
 Forever and forever,
 Ere either cross the river
 That never was recrossed,

My heart's clear trustful morning
 Was clouded o'er with doubt,
 There passed away a glory
 From all fair things without ;
 I seemed to walk beneath a load
 Through life—a dreary, weary road,
 That like an endless river flowed
 Through wretched barren fields.

But, after years of sorrow,
 And almost of despair,
 There came to me a whisper,
 A breath of Heaven's own air,

That spake of life in love and thought,
 Eternal in their nature, sought
 In God, that could not come to nought,
 As holding not of Time.

The street-lamps of a city,
 From far or near at night,
 A pale and earthly splendour
 Display, though ne'er so bright,
 With those eternal lamps on high
 Compared, that in the midnight sky
 Hang burning to the raptured eye
 The intense soul of light.

So all our other loving,
 Compared with love divine,
 Grows pale with loss of glory,
 Or ceases even to shine.
 Yet all the nobler loves of earth
 Their beauty all and all their worth
 Owe, and their being and their birth,
 To that eternal love.

And in that love eternal
 They are eternal too ;
 No longer merely human,
 Divine as they are true ;

Free from all taint of time and pure,
 Have power to pass not but endure ;
 And in their place in God are sure
 And firm as God's own throne.

No heart but is a chaos
 Till once the Spirit-Dove,
 As at the first creation,
 Descending from above,
 Like brooding bird upon its nest,
 Gives vital heat from wing and breast,
 Preparing, as it lies at rest,
 The formless void for light.

When, after preparation,
 God says, " Let there be light,"
 The formed and ready spirit,
 Free from the bonds of night,
 Bursts forth into the radiant air,
 And, meeting other spirits there,
 Rejoices as it finds them fair,
 The sons of light and love.

But, in a world that passes,
 Love cannot have its Home.
 God is what *is* forever,
 Was not, nor is to come ;

From Whom to Whom the ages roll,
 Yet, in eternal thought, One Whole :
 God is the City of the Soul,
 Of love and peace divine.

Oh for the glorious City
 That passes not away,
 The life in love eternal,
 The one glad endless day,
 The friends that have no trace of guile,
 Yet with intelligence the while
 Beam, and whose beamy glad-eyed smile
 Is all of kindness woven.

May no usurping idol
 Be ever seen, O Lord,
 Again upon the altar
 Where thou hast been adored;
 And ne'er profaned by other fires
 The heart that now with heat aspires
 To find in thee what it desires,
 Life in eternal love.

THE BRADLAUGH BUSINESS.

Since I wrote the following verses I have come to think that Mr. Bradlaugh ought to be admitted to Parliament, at least as readily as people who are open blasphemers, and say that God is a Person who, out of the mere good-pleasure of his will, damns angels and men; and at least as readily as the foolish people who confound civil and criminal law, and call it divine justice to hang one man for another.

THE brute, that blindly stumbles
 With eyes from thing to thing,
 In midst of law is lawless,
 Because it does not bring
 Together like to like, compare,
 Contrast, divide, combine, and share
 The God-like mind *to know*, and bear
 The God-like heart *to love*.

The brute from out its brutehood
 Would rise from law to law,
 Till, ever rising upward,
 All things in God it saw,—
 The Fount of legislation he,
 The first and last Necessity,
 What could not but forever be,—
 If once the brute could *think*.

Brutes cannot. But of humans *
 Shall one his vote for *laws*
 Give, who in brutal blindness,
 Denies the Eternal Cause?
 Who, all unlike the fool of old,
 The greatest lie that can be told,
 Not whispers to his heart, grown bold,
 Proclaims aloud, "No God".

—A cloud of kings and heroes
 Hung over you that hour,
 Who lived for England's greatness,
 And knew the source of power,
 And love us yet; and in their name,
 Delivered from their feared-for shame,
 The God-like lady, REASON, came:
 "O faithful Commons, Thanks".

* "Humans": we might do well to borrow this
 word from the French *humains*.

AN ELEGY.

THE good old God is gone—
 There is no one now to cry to,
 When in darkness and pain, and alone,
 Or lift the heart and sigh to.

He was a faithful friend
 When all else forsook,
 And carried out to its end
 Whatever he undertook.

He made and he unmade all
 In the earth and the sea and the skies—
 Gave life and all things to great and small,
 Angels and butterflies.

When the wee Aberdeenshire boy
 Asks his mother, "*Fa made 'at coo?*"
 And she thinks of his budding thought with
 joy,
 Oh, what can his mother do ?

Can she say that the cow's a result
 Of forces at work in the All,
 Or tell him to wait till he is an adult,
 And meantime play at his ball ?

Oh, weep for the God who is now no more !
 Oh, weep for the golden days
 When there still was a God to love and adore
 And be grateful to, and praise ! *

* It is perhaps necessary to state, for the sake of some readers, that the above verses were written not in the interests of Atheism, but against it. So, in the verses entitled *Titanic* and *Calvinism*, the reader is to see a protest against those who daringly interfere with the Divine sovereignty.

THE PIETIES.

I HEARD a hoarse song near a muddy ditch,
A labouring croak of high prophetic pitch :

“The grand old pieties are dead :
For God a loving fear, a trusting dread ;
For old age, and for womanhood,
A reverence and an awestruck mood ;
For childhood, veneration ;
The patriot-love of nation ;
For all of truly great and high
And noble, an admiring eye.”

“If that be true you sing,” I cried, “Sir Frog,
The tenant of this planet turns a rogue.
As a bush berries, I thought man’s mind these
Bore always, friend, and other pieties.
I do not like your mock-prophetic words,
Go to your ditch and mind your *puddock-curds* !
Mind your own work, and keep not preaching
Tophet.

Not even a man, how can you be a prophet ? ”
—At little yellow Jeremiah then
I threw a stone, which lighted near him, when
He sought his mud and ceased to croak of men.

TITANIC.

A BOY was gentle and fierce from birth.
 He loved in his heart's heart all on earth.
 He would lie for hours in the summer days
 By violet-tufts on the sunny braes,
 And gaze at the flowers till his heart grew sore,
 He knew not why, yet he gazed the more ;
 And, gazing, a mystery grew and grew,
 That he lived in forever, though no one knew.
 As he lay at rest among the broom,
 A mystic sight was the golden bloom,
 A mystic sound was the wild-bee's hum.
 There was something in all things that, though
 dumb,

Was ever upon the eve of speech :
 Oh, that its meaning he could but reach !
 A new-found nest, as if seen but once,
 Was ever again a new romance ;
 For the eggs were filled with mystic things,
 That would issue one day with eyes and wings,
 That everybody just said were *birds* ;
 So the boy began to think of words :
 The wonder of wonders opened then,
 For words led on to think of men,

Till at last one day the wondering elf
 Began to think of his thinking self;
 And then it had indeed been odd
 If he had not thought of who made God.
 But, ah ! good God ! what a God was he !
 Who damned poor souls eternally
 To torments worse than tongue could tell ;
 Some born to beg their way to Hell,
 To howl forever and wail in woe,
 And all because he willed it so !—
 The boy cried out in his agony,
 “ Is this the God that you give to me ?
 Is this the God of the universe ? Can
 A Monster like this be the Maker of man ?
 There are Gods of stone, there are Gods of wood,
 And some Gods are better, some not so good ;
 But how can this God of words, words, words,
 Be the Maker of me, and my flowers, and my
 birds ?

This God of yours I will even defy ;
 His name is I AM A FANTASTIC LIE.
 I swear by man, and by all that is,
 He shall not be mine, I will not be his,
 For the whole wide world were worse than odd,
 If there reigned over all a self-willed God ;
 One boundless sea of absurdity,
 Save that which knows it such in me.
 Against that God I will levy war ;
 I laugh at his brimstone, I mock at his tar ;

It *shall* go hard, if I climb not the steep ;
 I'll face him, propound *one* question deep—
 'Do two and two come to four or five ?'
 If he says to four, I may leave him alive
 Until he adds, 'I made it so,'
 And then he shall find that he rhymed to Woe;
 Yea, though in counting two twos to four,
 By one and one, he shewed one one more,
 I swear by man, by myself I swear,—
 And by things that know not,—I would not
 spare,—
 As well as by all that can understand,—
 He would suffer that day for his sleight-of-hand.
 The arrows of wit, well-winged with song,
 Are in him already, but he is strong ;
 In his throne deep-founded in Fantasy,
 Ah, it takes long for a God to die !
 But his days are numbered, he goes to Jove,
 Making way for the God whose name is Love—
 A God more dreadful far than he,
 For his name is Law, too, eternally."
 So said the boy, but his friends said "Hush !
 The house, to hear it, might fall and crush
 The bones of all of us underneath".
 And the boy but laughed, shewing all his teeth.
 He laughed indeed, but he did not joke,
 And the time is nearer than when he spoke.*

* See foot-note, page 271.

RECOLLECTIONS OF CORVICHEN.*

I.

THE HOUSE AND HOME.

THERE is one spot to me more dear
Than every spot on earth,
And though the straw-thatched cottage rear
No chimney o'er that hearth,

My Father's holy hearth, and though
No curling smoke ascend
Blue to the blue sky, and green grow
The grass, from end to end,

Where those white humble walls enclosed
Nine loving souls together,
In that sweet home where we reposed
Secure from world and weather,

From storms and alien eyes, so warm,
And though the souls are gone
Who gave that house and home their charm,
Save one dear soul alone,

* A farm in the North of Scotland.

Within my heart of hearts still glows
 That hearth, where'er I roam,
 From year to year, and backward goes
 My memory to that home—

HOME! What a word! How true the sound!
 The H is door, and lo,
 The M, like roof and wall, clings round
 The open space of O!—

Where morn and night the Sacred Lore
 My Father duly read,
 And kneeled to thank him and adore
 Who gave the Living Bread;

Where every Sabbath morn he prayed
 Well for the Word's success,
 And every Sabbath night he made
 Request the Word to bless ;

Where every noon my Mother went
 And closed the door, and took
 Her soul's sweet lunch, her dear head bent
 Above the sacred Book.

Once, in that closet, when a boy,
 The Worshipper I saw,
 Far fled each thought of play and toy,
 My heart was filled with awe:

I softly closed the door again,
 And softly went away,
 With new thoughts in my busy brain,
 And left the saint to pray.

But think not that they mourned and sighed :
 Sometimes their merry laughs
 Rose o'er the white-washed wall, and died
 Among the well-smoked rafters.

Though chiefly occupied had they
 Their thoughts with high God's splendour,
 Yet in them intermingled lay
 The Humorous and the Tender.

II.

THE ROBIN.

One awful winter night the hail
 Came rattling on the blast,
 And almost made our young hearts quail,
 It beat so fierce and fast.

Into the southern window grew
 Twigs of an apple tree :
 To one of them a Robin flew
 For shelter ; there sat he.

And when we young ones knew of that,
 We stood round in a ring
 To see, poor fellow, how he sat,
 His head beneath his wing.

My Father, seeing, to us calls,
 And drew on the clay floor,
 About mid-way between the walls,
 With his oak staff, a score,—

And made a law, *That over it*
None of us cross that night,
That undisturbed the Robin sit
Until the morning light.

Oh! were it possible to choose
 'Mong princes for a father,
 The best of them I would refuse
 And have my own one rather.

III.

JESS.

The pain we felt can ne'er be told
 When that dear old mare, Jess,
 In grinding poverty we sold
 For poor five pounds, or less.

For me, I dare almost advance,
I loved her as my soul.
(I never saw her kick but once—
’Twas when she had a foal.)

Our cheeks we often used to lay
Upon her velvet nose ;
We stroked, and loved her, day by day,
And love, caressing, grows.

She went, nor spoke, whate’er she thought,
Of our ingratitude,
Though many a year our work she wrought,
And had been mild and good.

How meekly went the old mare away !—
We never named her name,
But thought of her for many a day
With love, regret, and shame.

We knew that soon, whene’er she could
No more work well and win,
She would be shot, to save her food,
And for her bones and skin.

Once when my brother William said
That he had seen the mare,
My Father lifted up his head,
And gave a startled stare ;

For William touched a tender chord :

My Father's words were few—
The tears hung trembling on each word,
Fresh from his heart of dew.

A tender heart! But in it slept,
Like lightning in a cloud,
Fire that, on good cause, forth had leapt
In face of king or crowd.

IV.

THE KILBADDY MINISTER.

Oh, many a wandering wretch forlorn
Has known Corvichen well :
We welcomed those who had been born
To beg their way to Hell !

What numbers of the wandering race
Again in memory stir !
But most one tragic form and face
I mark among them there,

Kilbaddy, with his old silk hat,
And once-black long surtout,
And dingy-decent trousers, that
At first sight said to you,

"This man, in midst of all disgrace,
 Sin-tossed, and lost, and wrecked,
 Has still retained a touching trace
 Of former self-respect" ;—

A dress professional ; he preached,
 In prose and verse, his own :
 Of course he never conscience reached,
 And made no hearer groan ;

For God is law, and grace depends,
 He all supports, yet leans,
 And never yet his shining ends
 Worked out by dirty means :

From love-lit soul to soul the fire
 Is kindled by the Lord,
 While pulpiteers that preach for hire
 Give—*what they can afford*,

Like poor Kilbaddy. Day by day
 Damnation and salvation
 He preached, and nightly gave away
 His Fund of Sustentation

For drink, the half-begged whole of it,
 And drank with trembling hand—
 Sat with a sort of falling sit,
 Stood with a staggering stand.

With falling rise from full-length fall
 He often rose and fell,
 And hardly could be said at all
 To walk, not even not well.

With intermittent slow advance,
 By lawless zig-zag law,
 He reached his nightly bed and manse,
 The farmer's barn and straw.

Strange man ! He was his Deacon's-court,
 His own Kirk-session too,
 His Synod, and, as last resort
 For judgment what to do,

His own Assembly. He disdained
 What others might determine.
 He was, self-called and self-ordained,
 Himself his own best sermon.

—Ah, man is man in every guise :
 Although his life was mean,
 The heir of two eternities,
 Kilbaddy stood between !

And let us hope, for all the creeds,
 That Love Divine pursued,
 And, glorying in redeeming deeds,
 Kilbaddy's soul renewed.*

* See Appendix, Note VIII.

V.

CALVINISM :

FROM A CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW.

[*"Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions ; yet hath he not decreed any thing because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his GLORY, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to EVERLASTING DEATH. These angels and men, thus predestinated and fore-ordained, are PARTICULARLY AND UNCHANGEABLY DESIGNED ; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished."*—*Confession of Faith, C. III.*

The horrid blasphemy of this passage could not be exceeded ; and to its black doctrine of devils may be opposed the following texts : " God is love " ; " Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die ? saith the Lord God " ; " Not willing that any should perish " .]

A child's first thoughts are often odd :

I often wished that rather

My own kind father had been God

Instead of God the Father.

I must confess I loved the Son

And liked the Holy Ghost,

For they were doing and had done

A good deal for the lost.

But God the Father had from all

Eternity decreed

Unnumbered numbers, through the Fall,
To damn, of Adam's seed,

As it his self-willed heart might please.*

The Son came to atone :

He sat away and took his ease

On his eternal throne.

'Twas strange the Son and Holy Ghost

Could tamely stand all that,

And not unite to save the lost,

And bind him where he sat.

How Christ—I could not understand—

Had never yet—Oh, wonder !—

There where he sat at God's right hand,

Sprung up and seized the thunder,

And shewed himself a man, and let

The Father damn and curse,

* "The rest of mankind God was *pleased* to
pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath."—
Confession of Faith.

"I'm sure sma' *pleasure* it can gie,

E'en to a deil,

To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,

An' hear us squeal !

—BURNS.

See Appendix, Note IX.

In impotence fume on and fret,
And not a soul the worse.

*I knew not then that GOD IS LOVE,
That God is love indeed,
And not a fiend, all fiends above,
According to the Creed.*

* See foot-note, page 271.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE.

A New Interpretation.

Georg. IV., 454.

I.

In the morning light
And at even gray,
'Twixt the nascent night
And the dying day,
On the silent hill,
By the sounding shore,
He mourned Eurydice,
Now no more.

II.

For the sweet young wife
From a ravisher flew,
As a hare for life
When the hounds pursue,
If escape she may,
By the river's bank,
But a serpent lay
Where the grass grew rank.

See Orpheus gaze
 On death appalled :
 No more his Eurydice
 Speaks when called.

III.

He would lately lift,
 With his soul on fire,
 Apollo's gift,
 The living lyre,
 And his fancy flow
 Like a flooded rill
 When the melting snow
 Dashes down the hill,
 And his fairest meed
 As he sang the while
 Was the tear of Euryd
 And her raptured smile ;
 For he sang with power,
 With his thoughts in flood,
 When they burst like a hawthorn
 Hedge in bud.

IV.

But now he is mute,
 When, with whom she once
 Had oft lifted foot
 In the sprightly dance,

The Dryads make moan
 On the mighty hills,
 For he lies alone
 With a grief that fills
 Him full till he grows
 An embodied pain ;
 So deep his woes
 That words yet were vain.
 All night while the stars
 Stud the airy sea,
 Light-islands, he wars
 With his agony,
 Looking drearily up
 To the wide blue waste :
What God gave this cup
 Of so bitter taste ?—
 And if short sleep soothe,
 At the dawn of day
 The first of his thoughts is
 Euryd is away.

v.

The Dryads no more
 On aërial steep
 Their companion deplore ;
 Not a mountain weeps.
 On Rhodope, sigh
 Nor clamorous word,

On Pangaea high
 Not a wail is heard ;
 No laments from the land
 Of Rhesus come ;
 And the Getae, and Hebrus, and
 All are dumb.
 The Dryads were kind,
 But Eurydice gone
 Now remains in their mind
 Like a bird that has flown,
 Domestic and dear,
 Which they watched as it flew,
 Till it mixed and is one with
 The far-off blue.

VI.

But his heart still is wrung
 Where he lonely lies,
 With a silent tongue
 And with tearless eyes.
 He seeks not relief,
 Nor support, to lean,
 Nor asks in his grief
 What the gods can mean,
 As slowly unclose,
 In that grief sublime,
 The wounds and the woes
 Of the world and the time,

When he thinks of all
The ills that are :
What horrors appal
In impious war ;
How man to man
Is a beast of prey
Through the sad short span
Of his one dark day ;
That the law of pain
Is the deepest law,
And nature a reign
Of tooth and claw.
The pestilence stalks
And breathes men down,
As unseen he walks
Through the populous town—
Which the earthquake devours
At a gulp, with its domes,
Strong battlements, towers,
And ten thousand homes.
Do the kind gods feed
The young raven that cries ?
Do the high gods heed
When a sparrow dies ?
Do the gods know this,
That we cannot pass,
With our hearts full of bliss,
Through the peopled grass,

While the larks sing loud
 In the liquid sky,
 'Neath a July cloud
 Hanging white and high,
 But some small thing
 That keenly feels
 Lies helplessly dying
 Behind our heels ?

VII.

But no prying surmiser
 He knows, ere he pries
 Necessity wiser
 That all that is wise.
 The high gods indeed
 May perish never :
 Necessity only
 Has been forever.

VIII.

The sun once shone,
 Making all things bright,
 But his light is gone ;
 Thick and dark the night.
 To the far deep heart
 Shall the glad god of day
 Never gladness impart
 With his golden ray ?—

Though heavy and dull,
 The night will not linger
 If the dawn once put forth
 But one rosy finger.

IX.

What seizes the soul
 Of Orpheus now ?
 What great hope can roll
 The cloud from his brow ?
 He looks as if filled
 With some purpose high :
 What task has he willed
 To perform or die ?
 He takes his lyre,
 Neglected long,
 And he strengthens his heart
 With abundant song.

X.

In the morning light
 And at even gray,
 'Twixt the nascent night
 And the dying day,
 On the hill, by the moan
 Of the dark deep sea,
 He wanders alone
 With the thought of thee,

His own sweet wife,
 Ever singing of thee,
 His own lost life,
 Eurydice.
 But love is not love
 That will not dare :
 'Mong the Shades below—
 He will seek thee there.

XI.

Who is he that shall prate
 Of necessity,
 Set the bounds of fate,
 Of what cannot but be ?
 Ah, man is man
 And strong, but until
 Fate cease to be fate
 In his iron will,
 Remaining fate
 In his weakness still.

XII.

This well knows Orpheus,
 And, well knowing this,
 He goes to the throat
 Of the dreadful abyss.

XIII.

One moment he stands,
Firm, resolved, unaghast ;
Then descends. In his grasp
Is the magical shell :
The horrible jaws
Of Taenarus past,
The portals of Dis,
There is music in hell !
He approaches the grove
Of unspeakable fear,
The shades of the dead,
And their terrible King,
And the hearts that know not
To relent when they hear
The passionate prayers
Of a pleading thing.
From the nethermost seats
Of dark Erebus throng
The lifeless phantoms—
The thin ghosts glide—
Roused by the sound
Of unwonted song—
They come flocking like thousands
Of birds, that hide
In the shelter of leaves
At descent of the night,

Or driven from the mountains
By winter's snow :
Mothers and men,
And heroes of might,
And the bodies of boys,
They flock and flow,
With many a form
Of unmarried maid,
And young men who,
On the funeral pile,
With their parents' long-cherished
Hopes, were laid,
Before the sad eyes
That no more would smile,
By the black mud now
Of the putrid stream,
And the shapeless reed,
Of Cocytus bound,
And, horrible, worse
That a nightmare dream,
By the waters of Styx
Flowing nine times round.
The mansions themselves
Of Tartarean gloom
And its inmost reign,
Astounded, hear,
And the terrible Three
That pursue to their doom

The souls of the guilty,
 The Furies, give ear,
 And the blue snakes entwined
 In their locks are charmed,
 And Cerberus, gaping,
 The sweet music long
 Makes him listen agape
 With his six jaws wide,
 And the wheel of Ixion
 Is stopped by the song.

XIV.

The melodious might
 Of the poet prevails :
 Hell's hardest heart softens,
 So well he wails.

XV.

Stern Pluto thrills upon his sulphur throne
 And grimly smiles, remembering the day
 When, mad with love, on Enna's plain, his own
 He made Proserpina, and drove away,
 Lashing his horses, while his glorious prey,
 Regardless of her cries and sobs and moan,
 He held in one firm arm and hand all through
 The dark road down by which his chariot flew,
 And no more lay and no more reigned alone :
 He grimly smiles, and, turning to the Queen,

Says, "Let him have her : let it not be said
That love has braved all terrors and in vain.

A nobler might than mine we here have seen,
Not force of body, but of heart and brain.
Yet be conditions on the lover laid."

Then thus Proserpina to Orpheus : "Go,
And she shall follow thee; but this too know,
That if thou look behind, thou must upbraid
Thy folly ever after. Safe the soul
That adds to skill and daring self-control."

XVI.

He went exulting, and Euryd the fair
Came following after to the upper air ;
And though he had not seen her form adored,
Nor heard her footstep, her he held restored,
His own already, and gave way to bliss,
In fancied scene saying to her that and this ;
And when she was all but his own indeed,
And all but standing under daylight freed,
So strong Imagination in him wrought,
He stopped and looked behind—ah, not in
thought !

There all his labour poured he on the ground ;
And o'er Avernus thrice a dismal sound
Was heard as of a crashing, when he broke,
So simply by a single thoughtless stroke,
The law imposed ; and his Eurydice

Exclaimed in consternation : " Wretched me !
 Ah, Orpheus, why—what madness filled thy
 heart ?

Again united, we again must part—
 I hear the fates, and my way backward lies—
 Ah, sleep is sealing up my swimming eyes—
 I'm borne away, wrapped round with thickening
 night—

O my heart's brother, O my soul's delight,
 I stretch my failing arms—No more shall I—
 But I am gone—Remember me—Good-bye."
 She said, and suddenly she was not there,
 As vapours vanish mingling with the air.
 Nor did she see him, once and twice again,
 Reach after shadows, which he clasped in vain.
 He having many a thing he longed to say,
 Oh, could he see her but for half-a-day !
 Nor would stern Charon, pitying his mistake,
 Consent to ferry him across the lake.
 What could he do ? where turn in his despair ?
 What could he do, though he were even there
 Among the shades, that know not to forgive ?
 Seven powerful spirits in the chords might live,
 Nor her again restore who, cold, afloat,
 Was now returning in the Stygian boat.

XVII.

—The dawn of joy appeared.
 At first a scarcely apprehensible

Faint hint of light,
 She soon her long and rosy fingers reared
 And stretched until
 The night
 Fled far beyond the farthest western hill ;
 And bright
 The sun arose, and all the heart was gay :
 But one thick error blotted out the day
 Before the morn was well upon its way.

XVIII.

Fair Phœbe had renewed
 Her mildly melancholy face and beam
 O'er Strymon's lonely stream
 Seven times they say, while he, by grief subdued,
 Where a great rock rears its aërial head,
 There loved to live forlorn
 And musically mourn,
 He, twice bereaved, Eurydice twice dead ;
 And it is said
 That under the cool caves while he
 Most musically mourned
 Eurydice,
 And with sad earnest sportiveness adorned
 His grief,
 With culled wreathed words of glowing poesy,
 And words of virtuous power,
 If firmly pressed, to give a calm relief

To wounded mind,
 The tigers came and listened hour by hour,
 For his sweet song could soothe and bind
 The incarnate rages fawning at his foot ;
 And strong oaks did uproot
 Themselves and came and stood a grove around,
 Trembling in all their leaves to hear the en-
 trancing sound.

XIX.

So the sad nightingale
 Under the poplar shade
 Laments her young ones lost, with many a sweet
 wild wail,
 Her little unfledged young,
 For whom she secret made
 Her nest, found by the ploughman, where it
 clung,
 And now his cruel prey :
 She, sitting all the night upon a bough,
 Her wild grief wails away ;
 Now silent for a little while, and now
 Again renewing her complaining songs,
 She to the listening fields and stars relates her
 bitter wrongs.

XX.

But when his grief began
 To be less poignant, and to fill him less,

A changeful man
 He called himself in error, and would press
 Reproach upon his heart, in deep distress ;
 In error, since he yet would all prefer,
 Next to Eurydice, his grief for her.

XXI.

A wondrous change was coming and had come,
 For she was his as she had never been ;
 She seemed his inmost being.
 Rapt-gazing on the change of spirit-scene,
 His lyre and tongue lay dumb.
 The soul, too, she, of all his outward seeing,
 As of himself, anew he learned to trace,
 With prophet-eye of fine discovery, keen,
 The mysteries of Man's heart, the charms of
 Nature's face.

XXII.

He lived in love. His winged Heart now surveyed—
 veyed—
 No blind bound Ardour panting in his breast—
 With swifter, wider fiery plumes arrayed
 Than spreads the Morning speeding towards the
 west—
 Free of the universe, surveyed the Heights
 To which the Soul is framed to climb and soar,
 Spurning away all base and mean delights,

If without coward rest,
 Yet full of peace, she practise all the lore
 Won from the grey and sad-experienced Past,
 Whose wretched record with disgust, aghast,
 Soiled as it is with mingled blood and tears—
 A record of degrading, crushing fears,
 Of tyrannies, the lust of power and gold,
 Hatreds, and envies, slaveries, murderous war—
 Aghast who would not with despair behold
 But for some parts of pages that there are
 Seen here and there, which make the Lover bold,
 Foretelling of a time (—by Prophecy
 What ought to come may safely be foretold—)
 Bright as the Past was dark, when MAN, a sea
 Of multitudinous joy shall flow, and love his
 Moon shall be!

XXIII.

The love of one whose love,
 Like a pervading essence keenly felt,
 Filled him with joy, had raised him far above
 The region of the clouds, towards where the day,
 No shadow intervening, shines away ;
 Of one whose presence all about her dealt
 A subtle spirit-odour, light of light,
 Melodious mind outflowing, and so bright
 She seemed the soul of bloom :
 For several paces round she was a power

Whose empire none disputed, but her face
 Far less subdued her subjects than her grace,
 Which was supreme; and in her power and hour
 She banished gloom,
 That shrank away, rebuked, unlingering,
 The sad forbidding a forbidden thing;
 All in her presence felt themselves as free
 As if they had known her from eternity;
 She was as if the spirit of a sphere
 Had stepped from out the circle, soft as love,
 Without an angle, thoughtless of her own
 And of herself: ay, far away above
 The spot where mortals groan
 The love of her led Orpheus, for so great
 The love of her was in him, that to hate
 No venom'd enmity might move again;
 He pitied enmity, without disdain;
 Free and implacably he loved, and knew
 That Love no limit draws or ever drew,
 Or will allow in his eternal reign.

XXIV.

Love is forever unappeasable,
 Willing the good supreme
 With an immovable and infinite will,
 And hates and scorns the dream
 Of unawakened spirits, who, in slumber
 Tossing in envious fear,

The slaves of vilest hope, so far outnumber
 Those sleepless spirits clear
 Who live to love, and know the things that seem
 And know reality,
 And, victimised by vulpine villainy,
 Could sometimes smile content
 To lose their worldly work's reward, as lumber,
 Useless or worse, virtue's impediment,
 But for the fox's unsundered good,
 If possible it be
 The manifold,
 The slily-plaited, quirky spirit unrolled,
 Twist after twist, divine simplicity
 Can yet attain, when well and long withstood,
 With energy of loving opposition. He,
 Orpheus, would not exclude
 Even toughest cunning from his hope's embrace:
 Might it not, some far day, though tasking grace,
 Transformed, with all-adoring heart, behold
 Love's fairest face ?

XXV.

Affection oftentimes is weak, and Kindness
 Is often partial in its native blindness ;
 But LOVE is strong, just, wise, and terrible,
 And one with Thought itself, and one with Will,
 And one with Power, and one with Life ; and
 still

Pursues forever
 His bright and vast eternal purposes ;
 And through all darkness and confusion sees ;
 And even material necessity
 Can never
 A barrier interpose effectually
 Between him and his aim, and if it check
 His progress breaking path through all, it is
 That it his latent energy may stir :
 He plants his foot upon a nation's neck,
 For Fortune is his mighty minister,
 And for him raises kingdoms, overthrows ;
 His is the bloom of spring and winter's wreck :
 Tender is Love as terrible, and oft
 He glows
 Far more divinely soft
 Than is the haze that hangs in changing tints
 Of delicate living purple, where the sun
 On some sweet evening of early May
 Has sunk to rest ;
 But chiefly in the breast
 Of the prophetic poet is his sway,
 There, in high imageried halls, he hints
 To the all-apprehensive spirit, won
 To Truth and Beauty even from a boy,
 In Delphic utterance dark, his heart and mind,
 Who then, though oft with grief-involving joy,
 Wreathes with creative power the passing wind
 To many-coloured plumes, and sends his words,

Melodious thought embodied, forth like birds
 To fly among mankind,
 And win with song
 From envy, hatred, error, love of wrong,
 Hard hearts, and dark, and blind.

XXVI.

One with himself, and one
 In conscious unity with whatsoever
 May be the unnameable and deepest deep,
 That never
 Began to work and never shall have done,
 The Power that under and beyond the sun
 Is pauseless pulse of things,
 And brings
 All both to wakeful birth and all to sleep,
 And is at once the fount and double flow
 Of the unbeginning, endless, mystic River
 On whose all-boundless breast like foam-bells

go

Worlds upon worlds forever,
 Orpheus, in fearless peace, above,
 From the inmost refuge of contemplative Love,
 Looked out upon the struggling world below,
 Where anarchy and internecine war,
 Disguised, with other names, bring boundless

woe ;

And all-conspicuous are,

Deep-rooted, many-branched, and interlaced,
 Strong forms of thriving tyrannies,
 A vast and thick and dark and evil wood,
 Repressive of things good :
 Fair truth by error organised outfaced,
 Stifled for old low-profitable lies,
 Tough lies that, truth-immingled, last.
 O the poor Present ! O the sickening Past !
 O bloated growths that withered, rotted, stank !
 O horrid, leprous-spotted, gross and rank
 Weeds of the heart and brain,
 Priest-watered, nightmare-planted, wild and
 vain !
 O palaces of gods, bright, soft, secure,
 In wide-surrounding parks, with pompous gates !
 O one-roomed houses of the huddled poor
 Whom hell awaits !

XXVII.

"What sword is there like song
 To fight with error and tyrannic wrong ?"
 Cried Orpheus ; "and with song my soul is girt !
 Why linger in these visioned caves so long ?
 The rights of man are trampled in the dirt,
 Beneath the chariots of the proud and strong.
 —What sounds are these, that in my ear,
 At awful distance (—listening, till with pain
 It tingles), I begin at last to hear ?

They grow and grow, they sink, they swell again!
 Are they not ages distant? But more near
 And nearer still they roll, like muttering thunder.
 Whence come these multitudinous pulsations
 That seem the tread as of advancing nations?
 What sights yet dim? to stop the breath with
 wonder!

Sky-climbing rocks, like clouds discharging rain,
 Are vanishing, or, lightning-cleft asunder,
 Descend in shattered masses to the plain,
 And fertile golden slopes shine where they
 towered in vain.

What strange procession of mysterious forms,
 Like cloud-born giants of the thunder-storms,
 Winds yonder stretching down the dark ravine?
 Is that not Pluto there? and yon his Queen?
 That dark path leads but to Oblivion.
 Huge misbegot delusions of the brain
 That long had tyrannised the inward scene,
 The small and great, an endless cloudy train,
 There down they march at first majestically
 slow,

But with diminished majesty they go,
 Lingeringly-loth to leave their mansions of the
 mind.

The last at last are gone?
 No! *one* remains behind:
 At a vast interval he comes alone:
 Before him, none like him, and, after, none."

XXVIII.

Orpheus arose and left the visioned seat.
He felt himself the Spirit's, through and through;
The Voice of the one Spirit, and the Eye
Before which nought remained—all flowed and
flew ;

The slowest thing *his* vision could not cheat ;
To him the fleet were slow, the slowest fleet,
Even as he willed to see them all float by ;
Creeds, deities, and empires poured amain
Like vapour tumbling in a stream of air :
He was the form in which the Spirit knew
Itself and its creations, else in vain.
He took God's wrist, and felt the pulse's beat,
And knew of the world's health by counting
there ;
And were there dial of eternity,
He had known the hour of the eternal day,
In that he lived in love, and loved the light
alway.

XXIX.

He left his seat : he seized his lyre,
And touched anew the trembling strings
With magic power and mystic fire ;
Song after song to being springs :
And as he strikes the chords and sings,
And moulds the air to mighty forms

More subtly-strong than solid things,
 He seeks the Hyperborean fields,
 And treads through snow and freezing storms:
 The rudest crowds his power attest:
 The oaken heart to hear him yields;
 He tames the tigers of the breast.

xxx.

But his high songs of love displease
 To very madness many. Lo,
 The matrons of the Cicones
 Against the youth with hatred glow,
 With deep and deadly hatred; so,
 Amid their midnight Bacchant rites
 (The sacred highest that they know,
 Revered from childhood's tender days,
 An impious foe of heaven who slights),
 The prophet limb from limb is torn,
 And scattered o'er the fields of Thrace,
 And down the Hebrus stream his bleeding head
 is borne.

• • • • • • • • •

xxxI.

The prophet-martyr triumphed in his death!
 —The Spirit builds the world,
 Not to remain;
 And he who is the Spirit's sees in all
 But one vast spirit-vision
 In which the Spirit works incessantly,

According to its necessary nature
 (What could not but be nor be otherwise),
 In two-fold manner,
 So that the thing that comes, in whole and part,
 In coming passes,
 And nothing *is*, all *seems*, except the Spirit,
 Which is eternal and unchangeable,
 Infinite, not numerically one,
 Nor two, nor more than two,
 But only one in unity of nature,
 In the Ideal Centre
 Of the Ever-passing-coming, through all space,
 And time that ne'er began :
 To which the elephant is as the gnat,
 Three clods as thirty million solar systems ;
 The cow that labours and manures the land,
 And gives us milk, and cream, and cheese, and
 butter,
 And butter-milk,
 And flesh for meat, and leather for our shoes,
 And with her horn a snuff-box and a spoon,
 Is as the serpent,
 That twenty thousand Indians annually
 Sends to the grave ;
 The hungry swallow and the hungry spider
 Are both as the fat fly ;
 The Spirit in the famished lion roars,
 The Spirit fears him in the innocent lamb,
 Fed on the grass in which the Spirit flourished ;

The saint of sweetest life,
 Passing a forest on a mission of mercy,
 Is torn by the tiger
 That all night,
 Glutting his thirst,
 Has his jaws red with the rich feast of blood :
 What knows or cares the tiger
 For nerves that thrilled in the sweet hour of
 prayer ?

This is the truth : I claim acknowledgment.
 To lie for God is not the way to Heaven,
 Though trodden much by weak, false piety,
 That walks along a little totteringly.

* * * * * * *

"But why such awful words?" (methinks I hear
 A wooing-soft rebuke assail my ear).

"Why speak such things? 'Tis true we've
 thistles, thorns,

But no one cultivates them. What adorns
 Our life and makes it sweet is what we need.
 Why should we run on thorns simply to bleed ?
 Exposed to wind and weather we might roam,
 But choose a spot instead, and build a home."
 —"Yes," I reply; "and would, with all my
 heart,

That in Religion chiefly, and in Art,
 Men might find homes! Cold philosophic
 breath

Is oftentimes another name for death.

Mere speculation is as if a tree
 Could bare its roots, and, curious to see
 All how it grew, kept gazing till it died
 Beside its neighbour's green and leafy pride.
 But as I think that Love and Light are one
 Both underneath and all beyond the sun,
 I do not fear the face of any truth ;
 And I remember, in my early youth,
 That I grew colder when I cowered and cowered
 Before the blinding snow that blew and showered,
 But when I gave my body to the blast
 Freely, and welcomed it as 'twere, at last
 There seemed a kindly something in the cold
 That deigned to favour only what was bold :
 So has it been in manhood with the mind.
 When first I would not see, as were I blind,
 Things that in many hearts raise a cold damp,
 And all but quite extinguish faith's sweet lamp,
 They haunted and pursued, but when I turned,
 And resolutely looked and searched, and burned
 To know the best and worst, there blossomed out
 A rose to shame forever poor wan doubt.
 To speak the truth in one short sentence terse :
 The priests are playing at a universe
 Like little children. See ! they build a throne
 Of gilded paper, and they set thereon
 A painted Doll, with staring-steady eyes,
 And then surround the throne with butterflies ;*

* See foot-note, page 271.

But let them be: their play will soon be changed."

—"How BEAUTIFULLY *all* has been *arranged*!"

I heard exclaim one day a thriving grocer,

An elder of a Presbyterian church,

Pious, yet deeply philosophical,

From systematic thought earnestly pursued

(For genius, inborn, is not to be quenched),

In the intervals of selling cheese and butter,

Red herring (three a bunch), ling, haddocks, cod,

Jam, jelly, sugar, treacle, golden syrup,

Candles, and grease, and many other things

Both needless and too numerous to name—

Tea (wonderful at two-and-six a pound,

A tea which he could really recommend),

Coffee, potatoes, oil,—the list is endless—

Ham, pork, and mustard, honey, soap, and
onions—

He, in the midst of the invisible cloud

From these all day that rose and threw abroad

A miscellaneous conflicting smell,

Immersed in thought, turanian sage sublime,

What time his hands and mind were not em-
ployed

Arranging beautifully all his goods,

Or, with elaborate ingratiation,

Serving his customers, alluring some

And binding others to his well-filled shop,

Had penetrated deep, and so he said:

"How BEAUTIFULLY *all* has been *arranged*!"

I heard enraptured, saying to myself,
 Astonished at his wisdom, "Oh, that never
 Condimentarian contamination
 Had soiled the laurels of this wondrous sage!
 He in a pulpit might have wagged his poll,
 Or been a dominie." "How BEAU—," he said,
 Throwing his delighted mind into the *beau—*,
 His head to his left shoulder, and his eye
 Above some bars of soap on the top-shelf—
 All unaware of them, perhaps!—enrapt
 In contemplation of the works of God!
 Then I aloud: "Original as true!
 Most beautiful indeed! Think how the sky
 Is round, not square, and fits like a pot-lid!
 All is so well arranged, the universe
 Just seems to me like a large grocer's shop,
 With clearest evidence of wise design.
 I enter here your shop and look about
 And am at once aware of ruling mind
 Presiding over all, even when to me
 You are invisible, among your goods
 Deep hid in the back-shop: so in creation.
 What is a hen? Only a living heap
 Of flesh and feathers, so arranged that she
 May lay us eggs, and hatch them, and take care
 Of the young chickens—for, a timid thing
 At other times, of very little heart,
 This warm heap is arranged that, when her
 brood

Are all about her, had even Wellington,
 Backed by the squadrons of red Waterloo,
 But dared to crook a finger on a chick,
 Woe to his Roman nose or eagle eye!
 How delicately fine have been arranged
 The various members of the cocks and hens
 Within these eggs, so that, at breakfast, we
 Behold not one of them—nor beak, nor wing.
 Thus, when you have your breakfast at an inn,
 And eat two eggs, they cannot charge for
 chickens,

Although two chickens are within the shells :
That is a manifest divine arrangement !
 How closely is the chicken packed together
 Within the egg ! How near the spur and eye !
 Neatly arranged indeed ! And then the *life*—
 Ay, think of *that* ! The life ! The life *itself* ! *
 With infinite neatness it is spread throughout
 The invisible body, quite as thin as thought !
 Wonders of neatest packing and arrangement !
 The life, too, sleeping, which the hen awakes !
 A curious thing is life—no doubt at first

* "Life itself : " Not life merely, observe, as we all recognise it, with keener or duller mental vision, but Life ITSELF. Nothing will ever be known directly of life itself, till Matter ITSELF has been seen (through an *infinitely* improved microscope), which cannot be very long now, such are the enormous advances of science now-a-days. (See foot-note, page 34.)

Made of the finest nothing, riddled well—
 A very curious thing, and very useful :
 A fine creation ! Put some eggs below
 A brooding hen, wisely arranged to brood
 At certain times, and she, by proper sitting,
 Shall bring you out the little chickens' eyes
 To see with, so that they may see to feed,
 And grow by feeding, and so lay more eggs—
 And all for what ? why, for our breakfast-table,
 And for the grocer's profit. All arrangement !
 Doth Providence take care for honest grocers ?
 Vain question ! Mice for cats ; for spiders flies ;
 Lambs for the wolf and lion ; and a share
 Of hares and cocks and hens and geese for foxes ;
 Poor sewing girls for greedy shop-keepers,
 Paid at so little a shirt (—and *they* again
 Are so arranged that often large round sums
 They give to Christian churches, much bepraised
 And famed for Christian liberality) ;
 The wretched miser, whose tenacious virtue
 Grips like a vice, exists for lucky nephews ;
 Cork for cork-legs, if not for bottle-noses :
 What are they all but beautiful arrangements ?
 Unless, indeed, a Vital Mystery
 Is unbeginning source and stream of all,
 Stream everywhere and source, even from the
 dust
 That lies upon the highway up to man,

Embodied Thought and Love, without whose
presence

The boundless all of worlds were worth a herring.

—You have heard of Orpheus?—"No."

"What! never heard

Of Orpheus, founder of the Orphic Missions?

He was a missionary long ago,

And killed by heathen women. You have heard

Of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Shelley,

Burns?"

—"I've heard of Burns and Shakespeare."

"Well, these men

All followed Orpheus in the mission-field."

—"Was it to China?"—"No; to everywhere:

Their line and words have reached the world's
end—

The jumping-off place. They and many more,

As Schiller, Goethe, Heine, Wordsworth, Keats,

Who laboured in the mission-field, and left

Such soul-refreshing works—they all believed

The universe ineffably divine,

And very difficult to make from nothing,

Or even a wheel-barrow from a pinch of snuff."

—"Ah, then, they were not orthodox!"—"No,

no:

Your Candlishes, and Rainys, and Moncreiffs,

Your local little magnates orthodox,

They who, whenever or wherever born,

Would have believed with the majority,

Signing the current creed, are of the heathen
To whom the Orphic Missions come."—"Dear
me!"

Exclaimed the much-amazed turanian sage,
"Although I read our Missionary Record,
I never heard of them."—"That's like enough :
Orphic conversions are not there recorded ;
Yet they are numerous, and thus take place :
The Orphic missionary knows new truth,
From scientific search, or force of thought,
Like Darwin, or like Carlyle, and proclaims
The truth to men : 'He is not orthodox,'
Exclaimed, in former times, in boiling wrath,
The bigot priests (who flow in forms of creeds
Inherited, like waters in a channel),
'To death and hell with him!' and sent the
prophet

As far as they were able : *Now*, when freedom,
Long watered by the blood of such, has grown .
A vast o'ershadowing tree, beneath whose boughs
We sit at ease, in spite of king and priest,
The Orphic missionary tells his tale
Under the cheap threat of eternal fire,
Valued at twopence-farthing ; and the clergy
First gnaw in silent rage their barking hearts,
Then scold, malign ; then, when the Orphic truth
Is spreading fast, say nothing for a time ;
Then, when it is triumphant, forth they come
Proclaiming loud that it is true, and so

They manage to keep credit with the mob.
 But now, in Rome and Edinburgh both,
 It is not as it was ; the weakest minds—
 Or all but weakest—have begun to see
 The nature of a priest, and what he means,
 And what an Orphic prophet, in whose bosom
 God bubbles up in purest thought and love.
 At Rome, some time ago, beneath the nose
 Of Pio Nono, the Italians raised
 A noble statue to an Orphic sage
 Burned by the priests to death in former times :
 And, called from Paris for the bright occasion,
 One whom most happily they cannot burn—
 Monsieur Renan—unveiled wise Bruno's head,
 Amid heaven-reaching plaudits of the crowd :
 A first-rate Orphic lesson to all Europe.
 And, you remember, here at Edinburgh
 (As well as everywhere around the globe),
 Of Burns's centenary solemnised
 With vast spontaneous enthusiasm,
 Like a great flood outbursting, while for Knox
 Our Presbyterian priests endeavoured hard
 To get a get-up fête ter-centenary,
 Hoisted a flag, rang bell, and preached a sermon
 To an Indian officer and three old wives.
 Such is the progress of the Orphic Missions.
 The Orphic prophet triumphed in his death
 From age to age ; he triumphs and *must* triumph,
 Dragging behind him the reluctant priest.

A wise arrangement! as, I'm sure, you see,
 You who (—excuse me, for I do not flatter)
 Must be a most intelligent man indeed,
 Having sincerely signed the hard Confession,
 More hard than anything in Paul's Epistles,
 Signed, as an elder, with at least the hope,
 There where you could not see a glimpse of sense,
 That what our fathers wrote might not be non-
 sense,

And where the nonsense seemed the smallest
 fault,

That the infinite universe is not a Devil's.

A wise and beautiful arrangement too,
 That, when Entail, and Primogeniture,
 The Demon-Doctrine of Predestination,
 And other relics of the Feudal System,
 Have, by the Orphic tide, now flowing fast,
 Been swept away, you, and most other elders,
 So ready of belief, will not present
 The slightest let or hindrance whatsoever
 To the establishment of what is new:
 You'll all come like a baaing flock of sheep
 Following the wether. Isn't it beautiful?
 I'm sure you see it?"—"Yes," the grocer said,
 But looked a little puzzled.—"Well, the time
 May come when all men think and love, and
 Eden

Be realized, but, as it seems to me,
 It cannot come till we have learned to welcome,

As sent from Heaven, the Orphic missionaries,
 And put the priest into his proper place,—
 Admit the truth, however seeming ugly,
 And cease to lie for God. 'Twas Orpheus' way.
 He was a curious man. He walked the planets,
 Examined closely all their outs and ins,
 But found (he said) no traces of arrangement,
 And was inspired to know that none could be,
 But something nameless that surpassed design
 More than the loveliest eye a broken clod.
 He felt towards, but could not reach, this some-
 thing,

That is to say, with intellectual fingers,
 But knew for certain it is one with Love,
 From whose sole worship no temptation moved
 him ;

And when his head was borne adown the stream
 To the Lesbian shore, they say (—and woe ! if
 we

Love not the braveries of old tradition,
 The work of Spirit in the child-like heart
 Of simple times) the tongue still murmured
 LOVE ! ”

* * * * *

Methinks I hear the voice of which above
 I spake, that had a soft-rebuking tone,
 As if its owner lived in love alone,
 That comes so sweetly now my ear to woo
 From its soft mansion in the air-isle of Oo :

"Happy is he who stands where formless air
 Is word-woven, and the Spirit clothes the bare
 Forms flowing forth from out its Fount of Form
 (Unmoved as space within the eddying storm),
 If, while he sees forms rise and their decay,
 He knows of that which cannot pass away."
 —To which at once I make the due reply :
 "Not less or more can any *I* be *I* !
 When on life's sea I near the supreme strand,
 And have a great desire and love of land,
 And think of all the years when, tempest-tost,
 I struggled, battling hard, but far from lost,
 Faith shall be firm within my heart's warm core
 That love is waiting for me on the shore."

*Go, Verses, go, and in a mournful mood,
 Hence to Dundee, and, finding where the good
 And generous-hearted GEORGE GILFILLAN lies,
 The brave, impulsive, and unworldlywise,
 Throw yourselves all upon his grave and weep,
 And, having wept a while, say to him, "Sleep,
 Sleep on, though men do need thee sorely still,
 Thy voice and pen, sleep on, and take thy fill
 Of perfect rest" ; and, if ye have such powers,
 O then take root and bloom, fair votive Flowers.*

THE WALK WITH GOD.

My time is come : I die.
 Raise me on the bed, that I may speak.
 Put another pillow. Thank you : that'll do.
 Blessed be God that ever I was born !
 Come nearer me.
 Your young faces are sweet to my dying eyes :
 Stand all round about the bed.
 The ways of God are wonderful !
 I have always been slow to speak :
 There is often not much in words.
 I have just been thinking of my father's house.
 The burn flows by forever
 On its way to the sea ;
 The cottage and the kind hearts are gone :
 Green grows the grass on the cottage-floor ;
 Green grows the grass on their graves.
 Many generations of the lark
 Have sung to their heedless ears.
 The blue smoke curls no more to heaven
 From the wooden chimney
 That raised its frail straw-bound form and
 smoke-board
 Over the thatch, covered with ancient cushion-
 like moss,

Thick, rich, dark-green living velvet ;
 And no more to God forever
 The song rises from around the hearth,
 For the Man's Nest that the Angel's knew
 Beside the burn
 Is no more there.
 But there it is to me yet,
 And when shall it not be there ?
 I go out and in as before ;
 I hear the old voices,
 I see the old faces.
 In a waking dream
 I am again a little girl,
 Like you, Alice, my dear.
 I stand again and watch the swallows
 In the summer evening
 Flying about the quarry,
 And to and from their nests in the sand-bank ;
 And the rustle of the corn,
 As I stand there alone,
 Seems again to open infinite spaces within me,
 And something that the noises of the day
 Had scared afar
 Closes again round the earth,
 Sweetly-awful, like a Divine embrace.
 And last night I witnessed
 The resurrection of a winter evening.
 The wind howled and moaned
 Round the lonely house,

Coming with swift feet over a wide waste of
snow,
And was loud in the chimney,
As if it had in its passionate bosom
What excited a rage
That defied its own utterance,
And the hail rattled on the door and windows.
We sat round the broad hearth-stone
In the warm glow of a peat-fire.
My mother sat in the left corner,
Mending stockings,
At a little oil-lamp
(With wick of rush-pith)
Hung on the wall.
My father, in the other, told stories
Of feats of strength and agility
In his early days,
When men were more like men.
My brothers and my sister and I
(She knitting and I sewing)
Eagerly listened to my father's
Chronicles of the parish,
Except the youngest, Sandy,
Who, sitting next his mother,
Listened only by snatches,
For he was learning his Latin,
With a subdued hum,
"Bonus, bona, bonum,"
And my mother,

When she stopped to trim the lamp,
Cast from below her glasses
A glance at the scholar,
Full of pleasure and pride.
My father also, having ended a story,
And taken off his red black-striped night-cap,
And smoothed with his fingers
The fringe of grey hair about his bald head,
Gave a pleased look across the hearth
At the diligent boy,
Took a pinch from his tin snuff-box,
And turned softly round and round the head
Of his oak staff
Against one firm-shut eye,
Meditating belike the past and the future ;
Or, with far-away look,
He thought perhaps with awe of Him
Who gives snow like wool,
And of sorrow on the sea.
And, the frugal supper over,
He took the Book and read,
And the song of joy and health
Rose in the righteous cottage,
And prayer as to a present God.
And the wind howled on and moaned,
Like a flock of famished wild beasts,
And at intervals, borne fiercely on the blast,
The hail rattled on the door and on the windows.
That night my walk with God began !

Somehow, I know not how,
 He gave me love to Him,
 And loved me for the love He gave me.
 With silent close observance
 Since then I have watched His hand,
 That can be clearly seen
 Working in the affairs of all men
 By them who have the light of Christ within.
 Grammars, no doubt, and lexicons, are fine things,
 But whoever has that light kindled in him,
 He seems wise to me at least,
 A successful scholar.
 Many things must be dim and dark to men :
 Enough, if we worship the Great Light
 As I have seen a little congregation
 Of bright dandelions
 On an early May morning
 Worship the sun
 With wonder-wide adoring eyes.
 Think of walking with God !
 Is there any honour like that ?
 It is open to you all.
 He will walk with you,
 If you desire it above all things together.
 But do not deceive yourselves :
 Many fancy they walk with God
 Who do not do so.
 They take occasionally a turn
 On what they imagine the divine pathway,

And all their serious walking is in the ways of
the world.

This is the flirtation of the soul.

If you are not yet walking with God,

Own it frankly to yourself.

Stand, stand at the gate of prayer!

If you stand long enough with desire enough,

It will be opened.

It is all that can be said!

The first step in the walk is a mystery

Worthy of God.

Happy whom He chooses and renders willing!

His ways are wonderful.

Blessed be God that ever I was born!

Blessed be my parents and all who have loved
me!

Blessed be those who preach love in Scotland!

Blessed be God!

—I have tried to give my testimony.

I am worn out: let me down now.

THE WRECK AND THE ROCK.

"THE sea is false," 'tis said and sung,
"And ever has deceived,"
But this by their bold hearts, when young,
Would never be believed.

The bright day had not long begun—
They gazed across the bay :
Sweet-smiling in the glorious sun
The ancient traitor lay.

Their hearts were fresh and frank and brisk
As e'er put off from shore,
So fearless, too, that even risk
Had been a charm the more.

The sea rose ; they were tempest-tost ;
One of them washed from deck ;
And all the rest but two were lost
While clinging to the wreck.

They sought and found a Living Rock,
And entered there a cave,
And sat in peace, nor felt the shock
All round them of the wave.

THE CHOICE.

THOUGH, parted, we never again should meet,
Though all eternity should not restore
The soul whom I loved with a love complete ;
Though the love-glance, the smile, and the word
 no more,
Nor the ready hand, nor the hasting feet,
Show the generous heart that has ceased to beat;
Though goodness forever from earth has fled,
Though wisdom, and truth, and grace are dead ;
And my heart a cave of the spirit-sea,
Once a golden wave in the morning sun ;
Though life is death, and hope gone from me :
Were the choice made mine, it would be so,
Rather than all should be undone,
And that soul unknown that I came to know.

FABLES.

(FROM LA FONTAINE.)

I.

THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE ANT.

THE giddy Grasshopper,
No forethought to stop her,
All day, every day, as it passed,
Having sung, as if summer should always last,
Found herself unprovided, with nothing stored,
When the wild winds of winter roared :
Not a small bit of fly
Or of worm had laid by.
She went to cry want '
At her neighbour's, the Ant,
And begged her to lend her,
From death to defend her
Till summer should come,
Some grain to take home.
"On the faith of an insect, I'll pay what I'm
due,
The principal down, and the interest too,
Before August," said she.
But, ah me !

If the Ant has a fault (and we all need mending),
It isn't lending.

"What was your work when the weather was
good,

That you haven't laid up for winter food?"

And she looked askance where the borrower
stood.

—"Let it not displease you, to every comer
I sang, night and day, the whole of the summer."

—"You sang? I am very glad, I vow.

Ah well! dance now."

II.

THE FOX AND THE CROW.

A Crow, perched on a tree,
Held in his beak a piece of cheese.
Lured by the smell, came Reynard. He
Resolved by wit to win it: so,
"Good morning, Mister De Crow,"
He called out loud; he knew that titles please:
"How pretty are you! Oh, it does me good
But to behold your wings, so spotless-white!
I would not lie, believe me. Oh, how bright!
Did you but bless the ear as thus the sight,
I swear you'd be the phoenix of the wood."
The Crow at these words may but half rejoice;
And, to shew forth the sweetness of his voice,

He opens his big beak, lets fall his prey.
 Then Reynard runs to seize
 And soon devours ; and, " Since the day
 That I was born," said he, " a better cheese
 I have not tasted ; yet a good advice,
 Couched in a lesson, may be worth it twice.
 My good sir, learn,
 As you from my example may discern,
 The flatterer lives at the vain fool's expense.
 Goodbye !"
 The Crow, ashamed, with self-disgust intense,
 Swore, but a little late, to have more sense
 Than to be taken in by flattery.

III.

THE FROG AND THE OX.

A Frog beheld an Ox, whose size
 Seemed glorious in her eyes.
 She, liker far a newly-kittened kitten,
 With envy bitten
 Stretched out herself, and swelled, and tried to
 bring
 Her bulk to match the Ox's ; then
 Said to her sister, " Look ! Is that the thing ?"
 —" Oh, no indeed." —" Well, look at me again.
 Is that enough ? Say, have I reached it yet ?"
 —" No, no." —" Well, now ? " —" No." —" This ?"
 —" You do not get

To a distant nearness."——With ambition curst,
The little creature tried again, and burst.
—The world is full of folk about as wise :
A burgess builds a castle like a lord ;
Lordlings are princelier than they can afford ;
The petty prince must have his embassies.

GHAZELS.

I.

NOT QUITE LOST.

ENDLESS life of separation from my life's LIFE,
 . . . Is it well ? . . .
 In a night of blackest darkness, in the murky
 heart of hell !

Forever striving upward, I sink forever down—
 An eagle's heart, but, for his wings, clad with a
 tortoise-shell !

The priest's grandmother, and the priest, and
 my grandmother too,
 Have said the reason why I sink, and surely
they can tell.

I hated darkness, joined the Sun to hunt it
 round the world,
 And lost my soul. Ah me ! the light who can
 again expel ?

Oh, had I ne'er been born! or wisely stuck to
words,
Thought repetition quite enough, and said to
light farewell!

Oh, had I never clomb with zeal long since yon
glorious peak
To meet the morning! Happy they who keep
their native dell!

Had I, when God's bright prophet sank, the
priestly twilight loved,
And come from where I clung by day, and was
content to dwell!

But, Priests! who fix poor Hafiz' fate in hell!
know, God is there,
Where I could string Him pearls of praise in
many a fair ghazel.

II.

MACRAE.

Written on reading that this bright spirit had been expelled
by his "brethren" upon the motion of a spirit anything but bright.

Dull as Doctor ** **, dull in heart and brain,
Macrae,
You had been an honoured minister and ortho-
dox to day.

By God's foreordination he is orthodox in kind;
Whenever and wherever—*born* to say what
others say.

Not a speck on his white choker, not a crease
on his black coat,
And no expression in his face, he stiffly struts
away.

There never yet has been a man who has been
so *composed*.
Was ever mortal serious as he is solemn, pray?

Our fellow-creatures burning in sulphur or in
tar
Would mar, Macrae, your peace and mine
through Heaven's eternal day.

The * *s are of other stuff! For they can see
the smoke
Of torment rising dark and dense forever far
away,

And, safe themselves, sing on their song, and
never drop a tear:
Although their sons are burning there, *that*
makes them not less gay.

Hush, Hafiz, hush ! Vex not the saints upon
 your way to hell—
 Your everlasting home in tar ; love all men on
 the way.*

* These two ghazels, literally translated from the Persian of Hafiz, suggest that the poetic and priestly natures are alike antagonistic in all ages and countries. The learned commentators of the Divan have not been able to discover who Macrae (the "bright spirit") and Dr. Asterisks were. One commentator devotes ninety-three octavo pages to a discussion whether Dr. A. is the "spirit anything but bright". He contends, with great force of reasoning, that he is. Hafiz died in 1388 ; and after the lapse of 500 years it is improbable that farther light can be thrown on the subject.

SONGLETS.

I.

BORN ALIVE.

No dead-born songs can live,
 Nor will mine, born alive, at once die:
 Look into their manuscript-cradles
 And see my nurslings lie!

There's a little rosy rogue!
 Swathed from nipping critic-quill
 In fine metaphors and fancies.
 (—Ah! lie still, lie still!)

They sprang from sweet embraces,
 In the marriage of heart and brain,
 And thought and love in their faces
 Are surely plain.

II.

THE PARISH POET.

My songs will be sung for ages to come—
 The songs I have sung in these pages.
 Be Envy deaf that she may be dumb!
 My songs will be sung for ages.

What I sing in the page will live on the tongue,
 While worms eat the tomes of the sages ;
 By prince and peasant my songs will be sung,
 And ring through the world for ages.

III.

THE NEW MOON.

Can yonder be the sweet moon
 That, when love on my heart-strings played
 The sweetest of every sweet tune,
 The melody sweeter made ?

She still rises fair on the night,
 From behind yon dark cloud, as of old ;
 But where is her magical light ?
 Is it gone for a heart grown cold ?

IV.

FORBIDDEN FLOWERS.

Something was done in the dark one night,
 Against an ancient law,
 And a lovely sinner till morning light
 Was sleeplessly filled with awe.

The roses faded from her cheek,
 She felt a gnawing grief,

A sickening horror from week to week,
Till a few weeks brought relief.

She found her fears were happily vain,
More glad than tongue can tell,
And she never plucked a flower again
That grew on the brink of hell.

V.

MAGICAL SURGERY.

The fond mother runs and kisses
The wounds of her fallen child :
The healing is instantaneous,
And it stints its weeping wild.

When fallen in love, and love-wounded,
The youth is half-healed by a kiss,
And in (although but for) a moment.
What magical surgery this !

VI.

THE SEA AND ME.

A storm was brooding in my heart—
I walked beside the sea ;
The witnessing of her unrest
Wrought a strange calm in me.

My sympathetic heart and eye
Could see and understand
Her hopeless passion for the sky
And loathing of the land.

VII.

THE TRIPLE RAIN.

Apple-blossoms rained their odour,
Larks rained song from heaven above,
One morning when I met her,
And her eyes and mine rained love.

We stood a while together
In the sweetly-mingled shower:
Oh, it was glorious weather!
I shall ne'er forget the hour.

NOT ALONE.

ALONE I wandered : *alone* ? ah me !
 Who is alone in a sweet reverie ?
 As I wandered, 'tis true that but one you might
 see,
 But be sure that at fewest two more there would
 be.
 By the burn, on the hill, down the dell, in the
 wood,
 We had fellowship sweet, we were company
 good—
 Nature, and God, and I, we three !

My heart then was young, and so tender, and
 true,
 And fresh as a new-opened flower in the dew.
 Adam in Eden it was anew ;
 But with all the wonders around that grew,
 There was one thing awanting for one sweet
 want,
 One awanting that heaven had failed to grant—
 It was some fair Eve to woo.

And out of the whitest of lilies that be,
And out of the roses the reddest to see,
And sunbeams, and starlight, and love, ah me !
A wonder of beauty and purity,
So sweet, and so gentle, so wise, and so kind,
We made such a maiden for body and mind—
Nature, and God, and I, we three !

Forever my hourly, my daily delight,
I folded her too to my bosom at night ;
Within me, without me, about me, so bright
She lived, walked and talked, it was Paradise
quite.
At the lip of the wood when you saw but me,
There was Nature, and God, and I, and She ;
And we lived all in love and in light.

THE POET'S PRAYER.

SIRE of Spirits! Hear my prayer!
Let it not be lost in air!
Utterance of a life's desire!
Which Thine eye has witnessed where
Evermore it rises higher;
For my heart to Thee is bare—
Hid from no one jealously,
Whomsoe'er the peerer be,
Though it often woes may bring
To the palpitating thing.
Cardiphonious tongue of fire—
Give me *this*. If Thou inspire,
Grant the wish too, gracious Sire.

TO THE READER.

WHATEVER any man may say of man,
Degrading his own nature all he can,
With unwise wit, I, simple though I be,
Yea, like a babe in my simplicity,
Will yet maintain that man is very great,
If you will read the things I have to state ;
And though I hardly know to write in prose
More than a little crowing suckling knows,
With academic elegance, I mean,
So that the thin-spread truth at once is seen,
I will adventure yet to write in verse ;
And if I fail to make my writing terse,
I know I shall not fail to make it true ;
Because I know the sum of two and two
Quite well ; and God, who has in former days
Heard from the mouths of sucklings perfect
praise,
May pity my simplicity and give
Me love-begotten words that breathe and live,
With awkwardness and graces infantile,
That still may please you though they make
you smile.
But it may be some time before I try
To keep my promise : so, just now, goodbye.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX

Note I.—DESIGN. (P. 69.)

IN reasoning, people would sooner see eye to eye, if only they were sufficiently sincere in their efforts to attain truth, for then they would learn to think and speak with precision. Paley's watch, shewing design, must have a designer, and that designer, himself shewing far more design, must have a far more skilful designer; and so on forever, in an endless series of higher and higher designers. It *would* not "suffice" any sincere searcher for truth to see, were it possible, the watchmaker's maker, at the sight of whom various scientific questions, urgently demanding solution, would soon arise; and this, first of all, "*Who made him?*" For, if the watch required a maker, and the watch's maker a still more skilful maker, undoubtedly the watch's maker's maker would require a maker still more skilful; and so on forever. Poor Philip! Poor, poor Paley! People imagine a designing, ratiocinative God, not seeing that a ratiocinative God is an absurdity. A ratiocinative God would, for one thing, be a perfect puzzle to himself. We believe

that, if people were sufficiently sincere, they would become Christians, and see that there can be no God, except the Father of Jesus.

Note II.—INSTINCT. (P. 80.)

THE difference between instinct and reason may be stated in a single sentence: Whatever knowledge instinct may have or seem to shew, reason alone has knowledge of knowledge.

Note III.—CHRISTOLATRY. (P. 167.)

THE idolising of Christ and genuine heartfelt reverence for Christ are two things widely different. The former is dead and deadening, the latter living and life-giving.

Note IV.—PASTORS. (P. 176.)

WE are great readers now-a-days; and the pastor is being fast transformed into a mere leader of public worship. It almost seems indeed as if a new Protestantism were at hand, when every man shall be his own clergyman.

Note V.—WESLEY'S WORMS. (P. 231.)

THERE is no disrespect intended to the earnest Societies named after Wesley, which have done so great things for England and the world. If anyone wants edification, he will find much excellent building material, lying amidst much rubbish, in Charles Wesley's hymns. Part of that rubbish is the mention of man as a "worm" in every other page: hence the above title.

Note VI.—MOTHERS. (P. 235.)

THOUGH denied by Orestes, and questioned by Brother Shandy, it is generally admitted that women are related to the children to whom they have given birth. The Bible, however, in calling Salome simply "the mother of Zebedee's children," would undoubtedly be conclusive against this view, if the view had any bearing against Predestination or any other orthodox traditionary doctrine. In the circumstances, Science is free, with the Church's compliments. Aware of the time of day, Science, returning compliments, thanks the Church for nothing.

Note VII.—THE BLACK CUCKOO. (P. 255.)

C'EST le métier des prédicateurs de nous crier, *Soyez bons et sages !*—ROUSSEAU.

Note VIII.—KILBADDY. (P. 283.)

THIS strange waif must be dead many years ago. I never heard his name: he was always called "Kilbaddy" or "The Kilbaddy Minister". He was about the middle height, and had a keen intelligent eye.

Note IX.—CALVINISM. (P. 286.)

CALVINISM, when rid of some of its absurdities, is in essential agreement with the highest philosophical thought. See Spinoza's Letters.

Note X.—SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

THE publication of this book, originally intended for December, 1884, having been unavoidably

delayed for half-a-year, I am able to add the following interesting letter to Mr. Henry Thainsbrooke, with Colonel Duncairne's permission. It may seem to be making too much of Lord Moncreiff, who, though a clever politician, never rose to be a statesman, and is evidently quite unable to see or understand the depth of change which has already recently taken place and is now going on in the spiritual world. But though perhaps mentally thin, formal, emphatically (and almost merely) *executive* (or business-like), and rather provincial—in a word, deficient in fountain-force, his speeches but rarely shewing any approach to vitality—Lord Moncreiff is much admired; and if, as I lately saw it well put in a pamphlet by Mr. Hume Nisbet, an Edinburgh artist, “A nobleman deserves respect when he does his duty,” respect is justly not less when a man has achieved nobility by doing his duty well. He had a chief hand, when Lord Advocate, in a large number of useful Acts of Parliament relating to Scotland; and it is frequently said that the office of Lord Advocate could not have sunk to its present state if he had filled it. His gallant conduct to his colleague, Mr. Black, will not be forgotten by Edinburgh people.

“BROOMBUSH COTTAGE, *May 31, 1885.*

“MY DEAR THAINSBROOKE,

“I was glad to receive your letter, with the newspaper clippings, which, as you truly say, are truly signs of the times. The title of LL.D. from Edinburgh University to M. Renan speaks volumes;

Principal Rainy's advice * to the clergy to refrain from apologetic preaching speaks at least a good thick pamphlet; and Lord Moncreiff's term * of 'sceptical follies' for the birth-throes of a Higher Christianity is not unsuggestive. The clergy (not so very long ago) were the great witch-finders, and distinguished judges were not able to distinguish, with all the help of their horse-hair wigs, the gross delusion under which the clergy and themselves and others lay, but put 4000 innocent persons to death, in Scotland alone. Judges, quite as distinguished as Lord Moncreiff, believed that the Devil met the wizards and witches of Scotland one midnight in the church at North Berwick. The Devil occupied the pulpit, and called on each hearer in turn, who stood up in the pew and told what evil they had done since a certain previous meeting. He then descended the pulpit stairs, and stood at the vestry door, and his weird congregation filed out past him, one deep, having each the honour, in passing, to pause and kiss him, I will not say on what part of his royal person, but it was not on the mouth. Now, all the judges of the Court of Justiciary believed this, and doubtless Lord Moncreiff would have believed it too, thinking it at least 'sceptical folly' to doubt it; and if he had been on a circuit held at Glasgow, Stirling, and Ayr, in 1659, he would doubtless have condemned 17 persons to be burned for an imaginary crime, just as Principal Rainy, doubtless, if he had been the priest of Jupiter at Lystra in the first century, would have

* *The Scotsman*, 2nd April; 27th March.

brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people, tolerably convinced that there was much to be said in favour of its being allowed to be said that Barnabas was Jupiter, and Paul, Mercurius, when the people lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, 'The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men'. By-the-bye, by-and-bye, there will be much to be said in favour of its being allowed to be said, even by the leaders of public worship (priestcraft and priest having been abolished), that, the universe being infinite, it is pure nonsense to speak of God going up or down. *L'étrange Dieu que voilà!* The people at present have their religion by tradition from the first century, when the priests of Jupiter and others had, so to speak, a pocket-universe, which therefore every orthodox priest must yet possess.

"Lord Moncreiff says that the study of Pascal is an excellent preservative against some of the 'sceptical follies' of the age. He forgets that a true student must remember that Pascal lived in the seventeenth century, that, if Pascal had been a judge on the circuit mentioned, he would doubtless have condemned, even he, 17 persons to be burned for the imaginary crime of witchcraft, and that Voltaire, Rousseau, Gibbon, Hume, Goethe, Carlyle, Sainte-Beuve, Matthew Arnold, and hosts of persons, each possessing rather more insight than all the young men of Free St. George's Church together (including the trained penetration of their lecturer) have studied Pascal with great admiration, without being in the least preserved from 'folly,' just as

they have studied, and with greater admiration, the dramas of Sophocles, without forgetting that he earnestly believed in the current creed of his age and nation, and without being themselves in the least inclined to believe in any of all of his very many gods. With Voltaire, Rousseau, Gibbon, Hume, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, Carlyle, Emerson, Sainte-Beuve, Matthew Arnold, Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, Spencer, Mill, George Eliot, George Sand, and Victor Hugo, in his memory as unbelievers in the dogmas of popular Christianity, with hundreds of others, the least of whom is an intellectual giant when compared with Lord Moncreiff, he grotesquely forgot himself, just as he would have grotesquely forgot himself, if, with Sir Isaac Newton, Locke, and Milton, in his memory, he had spoken of disbelief in the Trinity as 'folly'. Voltaire would probably have said, with more point than politeness: 'The bramble, my Lord, is ever ready to be supreme; but it is a little difficult for the cedars of Lebanon to come under its shadow'.

"It is the misfortune of some minds that they cannot think historically; and so they imagine that Luther, if he lived now, would attack the errors of Catholicism, and that Pascal would attack the Jesuits! whereas it is all but certain that Pascal and Luther, as well as St. Paul and St. Augustine, if they lived now, would, equally with Carlyle and Emerson, see through and through the fantastic absurdities of popular Christianity itself. The same minds generally think vaguely of intellect as cumulative, which it is not, and ten thousand Moncreiffs and Rainys would not make one Gibbon or

Carlyle, just as eyesight is not cumulative, and ten thousand persons short-sighted cannot see so far as a single long-sighted person.

"The new Christianity, now struggling at the birth, will be, whatever else, free from the silly metaphysical absurdities of its predecessor. May it be practical, and try to realise, in every possible form, the dream of Christ—God's will done on earth as well as it can be done anywhere.

"I think you are right in your remarks on George Eliot and the Greek tragedians. I too observed the error, in the *Mill on the Floss*, of making Tom say, in the closing scene, 'It is coming, Maggie!'

"Why don't you come over! It has been on the whole a cold and wet May, but take a run over now that the weather has improved.

"Faithfully yours,

"GEORGE DUNCAIRNE."



